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Nephew of one pope and cousin of another, the young Cardinal of this narrative—who might at one time have been the Lord of Florence—died mysteriously at a time convenient to his kinsman and rival before he was twenty-five years old.

So short a career robbed him of widest fame in the tumultuous history of the Medici, but he is revealed here as a figure typical of the brilliant and tragic age in which he lived.

He was the natural son of Giuliano de' Medici, and his story is told as if it were from the memoirs of his unknown mother. His story is hers also; and one of the attractions of this book is her own subtly self-revealed character.

With a few minor exceptions, all the persons and their movements are historical, and the background of manners, politics, and art is as accurate as care can make it. But the bare facts of history have been united by invention into a vivid, connected, and detailed picture.

Novel or history, the book is a *tour de force* that holds the reader's interest for the story's sake and at the same time gives authentic life to an era that altered the course of civilisation.

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A CARDINAL
OF THE
MEDICI

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A CARDINAL
OF THE
MEDICI

BEING THE MEMOIRS OF
THE NAMELESS MOTHER OF THE
CARDINAL IPPOLITO
DE' MEDICI

by
MRS HICKS BEACH

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PREFACE

THE Narrative was a literary product of the sixteenth century. In his chapter on 'The End of the Italian Renaissance' in Volume III of the *Cambridge Modern History*, Mr A. J. Butler writes:

If the Renaissance with its materialism, its self-satisfaction, its reluctance to look facts in the face, has led to the decay of imaginative literature, it may claim perhaps in virtue of these very qualities to have cleared the ground in other directions and made possible the development of other branches of literary composition. Biography became increasingly common; and just as ordered history takes the place of the older chronicles, valuable in their way, and often charming in their artlessness, so the domestic records which had been frequent in Italian families pass into regular memoirs like those of Benvenuto Cellini, the spiritual father it may be said of all who have written autobiography... The kindred art of letter writing, reached, so far as modern vernaculars are concerned, as high a stage as ever it held.

The adoption of the narrative form (which is, of course, not at all original) for this picture of the life of the Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici has made a certain simplification possible. The stage of the Italy of 1503-42 is so gorgeous, the scene is so pulsating and so crowded with vigorous personalities, that a comparatively lucid setting for any one selected figure seemed easier of attainment from the single point of view—and the point of view given is that of the Cardinal's nameless Mother.

It has, of course, not been possible to achieve the narrative without loading myself for the purpose of its framework with a mass of material which has had to be passed through a very fine sieve, but I have omitted a formal bibliography as altogether misleading. The Renaissance volumes of the *Cambridge Modern History* have, attached to each chapter, a bibliography of Documents, Texts, Papers, Early Histories, Memoirs,

Treatises, and modern works which would seem to be exhaustive, although the editors say that they are not. The genuinely enquiring mind can always refer to these. For my own conception I have in some cases had to consult the original documents, and reference to these will be found in the Notes, but complete annotation would give an air of spurious erudition, for on the whole it has not been necessary to stray for facts beyond the scholarly books which have been written from documents, and which give vouchers in abundance. Out of the number of these I would select for mention in the first place Dr Ludwig von Pastor's *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, and of which Dr Gooch says: "The author has reared his towering structure not on the archives of the Vatican alone but also on those of the great Roman families and on the treasures of the provinces." (This work was in course of translation by the late Father Ralph Kerr of the Oratory.) In the second place I ought to record the help afforded by *The Last Florentine Republic* of Mr C. Roth (Methuen 1925), where almost every word is authenticated. While among other books well annotated are *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* by James Dennistoun (Longmans 1851) and *Die Jugend Caterinas de' Medici* by Alfred von Reumont (1856), in the French edition, 'Traduit, annoté et augmenté par Armand Baschet' (Plon, Paris 1866), while *Rome au Temps de Jules II et de Léon X* by E. Rodocanachi (Hachette 1912) is a mine of encyclopaedic learning and information about the social and artistic life of Renaissance Rome. The numberless contemporary histories are, as everyone is aware, full of pitfalls for the reason that their authors were as a rule commissioned to compile them by interested patrons.

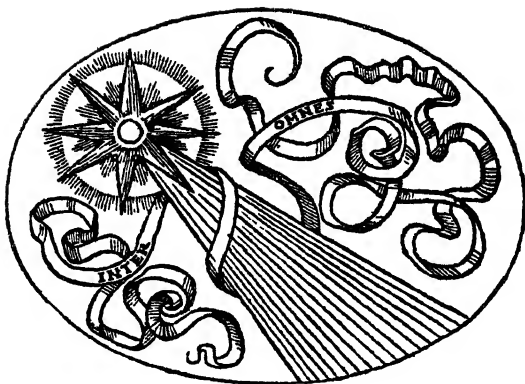
The Cardinal Ippolito has not been without his biographers. Dott. Michèle d'Ercole has written *Il Cardinale Ippolito de' Medici: Contributo Storico della 1^a metà del secolo XVI* (published by G. Giannone, Terlizzi 1907). In this pamphlet of a hundred pages, Dott. d'Ercole speaks of the paucity of documents available concerning the Cardinal. He mentions many of them, and he also refers to four accounts of him by earlier writers: by Giovio in *Elogium de Cardinale Mediceo*, by Nestor in *Histoire des Hommes Illustres de la Maison de Médicis* (Paris 1534), by

Ammirato in *Personaggi Illustri di Casa Medici*, and by the author of *Fasti Cardinalium Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae*, Vol. III (Venice 1703).

The Notes at the end of the book, already alluded to, are not altogether workmanlike, and the majority of them may be thought tiresomely informative about the obvious: but few people keep European history, literature and art in a clear pattern in the mind, and I hope that they will not be too much despised. None of the letters in the narrative will be found in the published collections except those annotated: and it only remains to say that, if I am accused of a crime Ben Jonson committed too, I can but cry *peccavi*.

SUSAN HICKS BEACH

January, 1937



The Pitti Palace, now the Florentine residence of the House of Savoy, was formerly that of the Medici Grand Dukes of Tuscany, and it houses the better half of the magnificent collection of pictures and works of art which the last of the Medici bequeathed to her native city. Over a mantelpiece, in one of the smaller rooms of the picture gallery, there hangs the portrait of a young man holding a bâton-of-command. He wears a closely fitting jerkin of mulberry-coloured velvet, and on his head is a cap with upstanding green feathers; it is with some surprise that the uninitiated discover this to be the portrait of the Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici.

Although unskilled re-lining has made this picture into a tragedy, it does not fail to arrest attention. Dark eyes, a little aslant, hold living eyes captive: and, should the gazer be alone with the Cardinal in the cabinet, he will never be sure that the words at the back of his own mind are not the cobweb echo of words actually heard, and seeking to assure with tenuous irony that here is one for whom the trumpets on the other side were not commanded. It is because of this bleak certainty that the terrestrial setting of this taut figure becomes a relevancy.

In the further rooms of the Pitti Palace itself, in the Uffizi over the river, in the Louvre, in the Prado, in the Hermitage, in the galleries of London and Berlin and in private collections hang the portraits, by artists who are still supreme, of nearly every person who drifts across these pages in the courts of Urbino, the Vatican, the Medici palace in Florence, the castello of Pagliano, the gothic palace at Fondi. Faces that we can understand almost too well look back at us: for they all speak of the eternal battle to domicile the ecstasy we call life—battle always to be lost because of the invading surge of the volcanic events we call history.

Never and nowhere, perhaps, has this conflict been so notable as on the Umbrian stage, and its manifold reverberations were to be existence for the child born in Urbino on Easter Eve 1510, and whose portrait in Hungarian dress was painted by Titian at Bologna in 1533 at the behest of the emperor Charles V.

●

URBINO

URBINO

THE secret of the mother of the Cardinal Ippolito is I believe inviolate. That the lord Giuliano de' Medici was his father is known to all.

Bastard of the Medici: the troughs that are the streets of Florence have spluttered with that cry.

Already, I apprehend that avoidance of rhetoric will be a matter which will need my watchfulness. In the palazzo of Urbino, where there was a great sunlight for the arts, the written word was given its rightful place among them, and, touching it, the lord duke Guidobaldo had a counsel of perfection. Memory brings back a winter afternoon with the lord duke on his couch near the hearth. He was suffering, as too often, from the gout which was his intermittent martyrdom, and he lay with his feet guarded by a cage from the pressure of a coverlet of white doe-skins, while the Venetian, the lord Pietro Bembo, with paper and quill in his hands, sat on a stool near the logs, stirring them now and again with his foot to a greater liveliness: others were there, too, and I myself among the petticoats, and the lord Pietro at the behest of the duchess had been busy with the penmanship of a letter which was designed to win applause in the court circle of her sister-in-law the lady Isabella d'Este at Mantua. It had been, as was intended, diversion for the lord duke to be made censor of ingenuity of phrase, and his grave look, which always seemed to be waiting for some perfect final event, had more than once relaxed. Presently he said that the fact that the destination of the letter was to be Mantua recalled to him that his father, the lord duke Federigo, had been sent there in boyhood to be with the princes and princesses of the Gonzaga under the tutorship of messer Vittorino da Feltre, and that his father would often relate that the master's dictum was ever this—first have something to say and then say it simply. The lord Bembo, I recollect, here interposed swiftly that simplicity was indeed the fitting dress for the Good and for the Wise and for the Beautiful, but that life itself was, mysteriously, not always an unmingled felicity: and would there not be a certain grossness, he asked, in making use of unadorned simplicity of

expression when setting forth too many of the enigmas of mortal existence, which seemed to him, past dispute, to be but the sorry spectacle of man for ever trying to circumvent the inevitable. Duke Guidobaldo made answer to this that the spectacle was therefore but that of man struggling to circumvent himself: and the disordered argument was tossed to and fro as the smoke crept up behind the sculptured frieze of cupids on the mantel, and the chill dusk crept from out of the corners and cloaked each one of us who sat there.

I am not without the understanding that life has never been restricted to mere meaning, but if I am to set forth on the voyage of the rediscovery of that for which it is hard to find significance, I should have, as the lord Cardinal Bembo said so long ago, the endowment of a gift which is something beyond the capacity to write down the most relevant things in the most effective order. I have no such gift of heaven: and it may well prove that I have moreover no gift for earthly relevance. Yet I can at least decide that this Memorial to the Inscrutable should have its beginning in the year of our Lord fifteen hundred and three: when his Holiness the Pope Alexander VI died with a suddenness that seemed sinister, but which may well have been natural enough.

The lord Cesare Borgia, son of the dead Pope, had long been the symbol of triumph. After my marriage I entered a world where polemics was for ever a diversion, and I heard it contended more than once that Borgia greed for what success of arms brought with it had not been ignoble. With France and Spain ever striving for the mastery within the narrow shores of the peninsula, no Pope could fail to remember that Rome had once meant empire, and that empire bringing desistance of rivalries had meant welfare for the whole world. I have heard it declaimed that the Papacy must be insatiable in outlook or it must perish. The Borgia was not the only Pontiff to be irked by the inconsequence of the Papal States in contrast to the dignity of dreams, and he saw that their instability served no purpose, and that welded into a belt from sea to sea they would at least be a furtherance towards a united Italy. He had his instrument in his son, and it might be held that the acquisition of the duchy of Urbino had been necessity as they conceived it. The lord Cesare's onslaught in the year 1501 had been unexpected, and the duke Guidobaldo could make no effective resistance; he had been obliged to flee to Santa Agata, and from there to Mantua, where his duchess, the lady Elisabetta, was already the guest of her brother the

marquis Gianfrancesco Gonzaga. The lord duke of Romagna had thereon lodged himself in the deserted palazzo at Urbino, and in due time all the Montefeltri treasures of art and literature were loaded on wagons and taken away to the fortress at Forlì pending their removal to Rome.

But the lord Cesare was a just ruler over this and the other territories he overcame, and in many a district that had known nothing but tumult and the tyranny of despots he had been hailed as a deliverer by the common people. In Urbino, where order and security were long established and where our rulers were beloved, this was discounted, and there had been 2 years of gloom that affected even my youthful spirits. Then, suddenly, was an afternoon when rumour winged its way that his Holiness, the Borgia, lay dead, and that the lord of Romagna himself was sick unto death in the palazzo of San Pietro in Rome. The market square at Urbino was now filled day after day with a buzzing throng yet fearful of hope, but a long week passed before those who had kept daily watch on the northern ramparts saw the dust of a company of horse on the riband of the road winding between the hills: and as the folk came streaming forth into the dusk of the August evening, scarce believing that it could be actually he, the lord duke, road-stained and weary, with the Fregosa brothers at his stirrups and men-at-arms behind him, rode in through the Lavagine gate and climbed the steep lane between the high houses. In the market square he drew rein, and sat there with a hand uplifted in salutation among the shouts of the people and the clanging of all the bells.

It was from Venice that he had journeyed. The Borgia domination had been all-pervading, and the marquis of Mantua had been prevailed on (and by the king of France I understand) to excuse himself from giving our rulers continued asylum. Venice had honoured itself in welcoming them, and there the duchess herself lingered until December was in and the palazzo had been cleansed and fitted in some sort for her reception. Her return is ever to be remembered, for, with comprehension of the meaning life had for her, all had combined to give pageantry to her arrival. The populace itself streamed out to greet her, and, because of the throng, the last few miles of her journey were delayed almost beyond the patience of the ladies of the duchy who were gathered inside the Cathedral door. I, a girl of fourteen years, was there beside my mother, and weary and cold enough with the long waiting. But the feet of the horses were heard at length, and the duchess with her slumbrous eyes and her deep-toned voice was presently among us in the church, and disencumbered of hood and mantle she acknowledged our

obeisance. A veil of golden gauze was then placed over her hair, she took with a transient smile the branch of olive all in beaten gold that had been prepared for her acceptance, and, giving her other hand to the lord Bishop advanced down the nave to meet her, she returned with him to the high altar: here she knelt surrounded by priests and acolytes while a *Te Deum* was sung by responding choirs to the light of a thousand tapers. All felt the exhilaration of demeanour restored to Urbino.

The lord duke himself was not present, for he had been summoned to Rome in the month of November: his sister Giovanna de' Montefeltro was wife to Giovanni della Rovere, lord of Sinigaglia Moldovi and brother of the new Pope, and this entanglement of relationship was destiny for Urbino.

The past, as I reconnoitre it, is overthronged to confusion, and in the throng it is easy to overlook the figure of the aged Cardinal of Siena, Francesco Piccolomini, who was crowned Pope as Pius III in October, and who expired 10 days later, when the Cardinal della Rovere (nephew of his one-time Holiness Sixtus IV) took his place as the Pope Julius II. I do not seek to disentangle for myself any of the matters concerned with the papal election: but it is well to recall the complications which led to the choice of an heir for the duchy: this proving ultimately to be disaster for the papacy itself in the years packed with undreamed-of contingencies which lay ahead of us all.

It was known to all that of the marriage of the duke and duchess of Urbino there would be no offspring, and the duchy had ever regarded as heir the lord Antonello di Sanseverino, exiled prince of Salerno, and son of the lord duke's sister the lady Costanza. Pope Julius now offered to demand the restitution of the Sanseverino estates in the kingdom of Naples from the king of Spain if the lord Antonello would renounce all pretensions to Urbino and would marry his daughter Felice, for whom fitting provision had to be made. At the same time he proposed that the lord Guidobaldo should adopt as heir to the duchy their mutual nephew Francesco Maria della Rovere who was sharing the education of the young prince Gaston de Foix at the court of France.

It was from the lord Cesare Gonzaga and the lord Baldassare Castiglione that I learned in after days of all these matters. When the lord Cesare Gonzaga accompanied the lord duke to Rome he had found

there his cousin Baldassare, who was in the service of the marquis of Mantua to whom they were both of kin. The lord duke had formed a warm friendship for the Castiglione, and, desiring greatly to attach him to his own person, he obtained in time the unwilling consent of his brother-in-law, the Gonzaga, to the transference. For the court of Urbino, for our lady duchess, and in some small degree for mine own self, this was an occurrence of real moment and should not be omitted from any relation of events. The integrity of the new courtier was absolute, and his sympathy with the difficulties of the duke Guidobaldo was unflinching. He himself was a lover of art and letters, and he has told me that he was able to realise how much the lord duke was swayed at this time by the wish to recover his possessions from Forli. The duke's paramount anxiety was for the fate of the library of rare manuscripts and books which his father had collected, but he was impatient also, for the sake of the duchess, to restore the chambers of the palazzo to their aspect of seemly luxuriance. Thus the Pope finally prevailed on him in the matter of his heir, and in the summer he obtained leave to lay siege to Forli, whose captain remained staunch in allegiance to the lord Cesare now in durance in S. Pietro. In August (1504) wagons came back with most of the rescued chattels, but our lady never ceased to grieve that the great tapestries of the story of Troy had been given at his request to the French Cardinal d'Amboise: and she was always piqued that she was unable to recover from her sister-in-law, the lady Isabella d'Este, two marble figures which the marchioness had coveted and which she had prevailed on the lord Cesare to relinquish to her.¹ The books too, all bound in crimson velvet and clasped with gold and silver, were not intact,² but on the whole not much damage had been done, and in a short time that which had been demolished was reconstructed, and, under the guidance of our lady, the life of the court was revived. It was at this time that I was given in marriage to one of the gentlemen of the court and was taken into the service of the duchess.

The sons of remarkable men have ever a burden to carry, and our lord duke Guidobaldo was not an exception to this maxim. His father, the lord Federigo, first duke of Urbino, had made a tradition and had established the embarrassments which accompany prestige. The countship of the Montefeltri was now a renowned duchy with the obligations of a ducal ritual. I have heard my grandfather say that the palazzi at Urbino and at Gubbio which the duke Federigo built were but shells

of poor material, and that time would prove it; yet they had immensity, were glorious within, and the household at Urbino numbered over 500 souls at the time of the death of the first duke, who had acquired great wealth as captain-general of the League and had spent lavishly not only on the welfare of the duchy itself but on the encouragement of learning and of art. The 17 gentlemen-in-waiting were reduced in numbers after the return of the duke Guidobaldo from his exile in Venice, but the payment of their salaries was, as formerly, very intermittent, and often when we were wanting for money my husband (whose services had been retained) would wonder ruefully if 5 secretaries, 5 architects and engineers, and 5 readers for meals were really a necessity; to put out of count all the clerks, transcribers of manuscripts and teachers of logic and philosophy. I judge that our lord duke himself would have been willing for a much greater simplicity of life but that he feared to compromise its values in the estimation of the lady Elisabetta his wife, for whom the ceremonial had (as I now envisage) a worth altogether mystical. That he was often irked by the urbanity without flaw is certain. His mother had been of the Sforza, and from her he had the distinction of his thin features and his fairness of skin and his bronze hair: and through her, too, he had inherited the disease which crippled him so often and so sorely. His existence was indeed one of strain that only his great fortitude could have sustained, for the lord duke Federigo had been paramount in a land perpetually at war because of his genius for war, and, with the burden of everything else he had consummated, he had bequeathed the leadership of the League of Italy to his son. From boyhood the lord duke Guidobaldo had thus been called on to manipulate the armies of the League in battle now here and now there. He played his part without faltering, but for his exhaustion there was no refuge: he must always step from the fatigues of a campaign on to the stage of the most distinguished court in the world where his consort sat enthroned with a halo around her head.

This is how I myself see it all, but the lord Baldassare Castiglione has set it forth with a more perfect amiability in his 4 books which he has named *Il Cortegiano* (*The Courtier*). Here he tells how that after the death of the lord duke Guidobaldo, he being then in Rome, weary of soul and fain of life as he had known it in Urbino, it occurred to him to rescue the fair memory of the Montefeltro court from mortal oblivion, so taking up his pen he made a picture in words as he saith: *Not*

of the handiwork of Raphael or Michael Angelo, but of an unknown painter that can do no more than draw the principal lines without setting forth the truth with beautiful colours. Many who had their memories of the court obtained scrivener's copies of the manuscript, and years later when he was papal Nuncio at the court of Spain, the lord Baldassare committed it to the printing press of messer Aldus Manutius at Venice, with a foreword addressed to the lord Michael de Silva, Bishop of Viseo.³ In this preface he relates that for many years he had sought leisure to review to his own satisfaction that which in the first instance had been the accomplishment of a few days of literary diligence. What finally spurred him to this revision was the knowledge which came to him in Spain that the lady Vittoria Colonna, marchioness of Pescara,⁴ had had replicas made from the copy in her possession, and that in Naples, where it seemed to be in general circulation, were those who sought to amend it after a fashion of their own. The lord Castiglione realised that if the book must be let abroad it were less hurtful to correct it with his own hands: this he did therefore, commending it to the judgment of Time which is a father to Truth and a judge without Passion.

Time is, as I write, not yet hoary enough to be without passion, and, when all have acclaimed the narrative, it seemeth an impudence that I should record my own sensibility about it. But the chronicler had, I hold, one paramount aim, and this was to give pleasure in her later years to a princess whom he worshipped. He has delineated her court as she would wish to think of it: he has constructed a mould out of her conception and then he has poured therein his molten material. And I would here transcribe his own words.

As every man knoweth the little city of Urbino is situated upon the side of the Apennines towards the Gulf of Venice ~~~~ The country is very plentiful and full of fruits ~~~~ But among the greatest felicities that man can have I count this the chief that now for a long time it has always been governed by very good princes ~~~~ We may make good proof of this with the famous memory of duke Federigo who in his day was the light of Italy ~~~~ This man, among his other praiseworthy deeds, in the hard and sharp situation of Urbino built a palace, to the opinion of many men, the fairest that was to be found in all Italy, and so furnished it that it appeared not a palace but a city in form of a palace, and that not only with ordinary matters as silver plate, hangings for chambers of cloth of gold of silk and other like, but also for sightliness and to deck it out withal, placed there a wondrous number of ancient statues of marble and metal, very excellent paintings, and instruments of music of all sorts: and nothing would he have there but what was most rare and excellent. To this, with very great

charges, he gathered together a great number of excellent and rare books in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, esteeming these to be the chief ornaments of his great palace.

This duke as he lived so did he end his life with glory, and left duke after him as his only male heir, a child of ten years called Guidobaldo. This child was heir of all his father's virtues. So that the opinion of men was, that of all duke Federigo's notable deeds none was greater than that he begat such a son. But fortune with all her might withstood this so glorious a beginning in such wise that before duke Guidobaldo was XX years old he fell sick of the gout. And in this manner was one of the best favoured and towardliest personages in the world marred in his green age. And beside, not satisfied with this, fortune was so contrary to him in all his purposes that very seldom he brought to pass anything to his mind. And for all that he had in him both wisdom and an invincible courage, yet it seemed that whatsoever he took in hand, it always came to ill-success. He always bore out with stoutness of courage and never yielded to fortune, but despising her storms lived with great dignity and estimation among all men: in sickness as one that was sound, and in adversity as one that was most fortunate.

He set his delight above all things to have his house furnished with most noble and valiant Gentlemen with whom he lived familiarly, enjoying their conversation, He himself being well acquainted with both tongues and learned in the infinite things had besides much affability and pleasantry. And although he was not able himself to practise feats of chivalry as in his youth, yet he took very great delight to behold them in other men. And upon this at tilt, at tourney, in playing at all sorts of weapons, also in inventing devices in pastimes, in music, in all exercises meet for noble gentlemen, every man strove to shew himself such a one as might deserve to be judged worthy of so noble an assembly. Therefore were all the hours of the day divided into honourable and pleasant exercises, as well of the body as of the mind.

But because the duke used continually by reason of his infirmity soon after supper to go to his rest, every man ordinarily at that hour drew near where the duchess was, the lady Elisabetta Gonzaga: where was also continually the lady Emilia Pia, who, because she was endued with so lively a wit and judgement, seemed the mistress and ringleader of all the company.

There was then to be heard pleasant communications and merry conceits, so that this house might well be called the mansion of mirth and joy. And I believe that never in any other place was such sweet conversation tasted as it was once there. For leaving apart what honour it was to us all to serve such a lord, every man conceived in his mind a high contentment directly we came into the duchess' presence. And this was a chain that kept all linked together in love.

The like was between the women, with whom we had such free and honest conversation that every man might commune, sit, dally and laugh with whom he lusted. But such was the respect which we had for the duchess' will that the self-same liberty was a very great bridle. Neither was there any that thought it not the greatest pleasure he could have in the world to please her, and the greatest grief to offend her.

All those who had never seen the duchess in their life before knew her at once for a very great lady, for all her acts, words and gestures in jesting and laughing were knitted together with a very sober mood and greatness; and laughing matters and witty jests were tempered with a grave and comely majesty; wondrous great liberty being coupled with most decorous conditions. And all that came into her presence having this respect fixed in their breast, it seemed that she had them all at her beck.

~~~~~ *The manner of the gentlemen of the house was immediately after supper to assemble together where the duchess was; where among other recreations, as music and dancing which they used continually, they sometimes propounded neat problems, or invented pastimes on the initiative of one or another: and under the cover of which the bystanders disclosed their thoughts to whom they would.*

*At other times there arose disputations of divers matters: because (as I have said) the house was replenished with most noble wits ~~~~~ And the order thereof was such that every man sat him down at his will or as it fell to his lot, in a circle together, and in sitting were divided a man and a woman, as long as there were women, for nearly always the number of men was far the greater. Then were they governed as the duchess thought best, which many times gave this charge to the lady Emilia.<sup>5</sup>*

The picture is a captivating one; and is not the idea often most truly the fact? But as I turn over the pages which ennoble all that vanished world, I realise (as perhaps no other so fully can) that the studied candour of the words is not quite valid. We are to believe in a moral atmosphere so crystal clear that continency and incontinency could be made the perpetual theme and remain abstractions only. We are to believe in a liberty of deportment that alone with angels (those riddles of heaven) could be without contingency. *The people imagine a vain thing* said king David of old.

My marriage immersed me in this atmosphere of laborious brilliance. I had lived always in my mountain home on the confines of the duchy where the effort to give me all the accomplishments of a gentlewoman

had been countered by my gay determination to evade all that was irksome in that endeavour and to employ industry only on what pleased girlish consideration. The rigours of this struggle did not, as I discovered, end with marriage, for my husband himself became my tutor, making me presently aware that the duchess was irked by my bashfulness and want of sophistication. I did not remain unsophisticated for very long, because I learnt the value of my own beauty and soon felt the exhilaration of a complicated life on a stage full of movement. But this acquired poise had its own penalty, for I found, when I would return for rare visits to the little castello where I had spent my happy childhood, that I had forfeited my old standing as daughter and sister. I came to mine own people in the alien guise of a court-lady, and a barrier was there which I could never cross—then or afterwards. And I was too young to make of loneliness a friend.

It was rumoured that our lady Elisabetta was not content with the compact that had been made with the Pope regarding an heir to the duchy. But she gave no sign, and, when all within the palazzo was once again in order, it was announced that the young Francesco Maria della Rovere was to come to Urbino, and that his mother and his sisters would accompany him. The sisters were of a usual complexion: the lady Maria Varano was widow of the lord of Camerino and she had her infant son with her: the younger sister, Costanza, was mine own age and I had directions to attend her pleasures which were not always mine own, for she would engage me endlessly in the game of scartino at which I did not excel. It was a time of effort for all. The inn at which the retainers of guests had used to be lodged had been fired by the soldiery of the Borgia in a drunken revel and was not yet reconstructed. There was bickering between the servants of the palazzo and those of Sinigaglia and this sometimes affected the service. But the lord Ottaviano Fregosa and his brother sir Federigo were effectively assiduous. They were exiles from Genoa, and I had been puzzled by their pervading influence and their established mien. I learned, what all others knew, that the lord duke Federigo had been the father of many children born out of wedlock, and that these were the sons of his daughter Gentile who had been married into the noble family of the Fregosa of Genoa. Moreover the lady Emilia Pio, who was the daughter of the lord Mario Pio da Carpi, was the widow of one of the duke Federigo's bastard sons, Antonio: she was the *alter ego* of our lady and she never liked me.

But it was the lord Baldassare Castiglione who was really indispensable at this time, for the reason that his horsemanship and manliness gave him influence with the new heir. He had established himself with his cousin Gonzaga in a dwelling in the town, and the whole court was beginning to realise the nobility of his temper, the cultivation of his mind, his candour and his distinction, as well as the bravery which attracted the boy Francesco Maria. This was a handsome boy of the della Rovere breed, restless, excitable. Continuous occupation out of doors had to be discovered for him, and the Castiglione who, after a day's hunting of wolves or wild boars, would take a lute after supper and sing some verses of his own composing, was a disciplined example of manhood which was not without effect, and the youth had attained a measure of deportment by the time the papal Nuncio arrived in Urbino with a great suite to install our lord duke as Gonfalonier of the Church and to seal the compact regarding his heir. The Cathedral was packed from end to end when, after High Mass, the 2 great banners of the Church and the baton of command were given into the duke's keeping, he kneeling to receive them. A few days later there was another congregation and another solemn Mass, and the most precious of all the missals from the library being placed in the hands of the young Francesco, the deputies from the communities of the duchy took the oath of fidelity and homage to him.

After this I recall a year (1504) of some dolour. In November the lord duke was ill with his ever-recurring malady, and our lady told us with tears that his Holiness had commanded his presence in Rome. She wrote with her own hand to explain that the journey was not possible, but the new Pope was, we had to learn, not to be denied. There arrived presently at Urbino a litter with 2 dappled hackneys, and those who brought it carried an imperative summons. With the young lord Francesco, and with all his gentlemen including mine own husband, the lord Guidobaldo set out in the wind and the rain through the mountain gorges, and then the news came back to us that his ailment had made a long halt at Nami necessary. It was not until the new year that he reached Rome. The lord Castiglione wrote for the gratification of the duchess that his Holiness and all the Cardinals were assembled at the entrance of the palazzo of San Pietro to welcome him, but that he was still so lame and so weak that he had had to be supported up the steps. A later letter spoke of the eagerness of Pope Julius for a campaign in

Romagna to recover the cities which the Venetians had seized after the death of the Borgia, but it said that for the moment all was at a stand, and that Rome was very gay and pleasant.

These, and other letters that were received, produced a mood (and indeed varied moods) in our lady that infected all. She was never without inquietude about the frail health of her husband, and she was dismayed at the warlike designs of the Pontiff. Moreover she had learned from the Nuncio that a wife for the new heir was a matter that was already under discussion, and she was anxious that choice should be made of her niece the lady Leonora Gonzaga of Mantua. Her restlessness grew day by day more manifest. I learnt (but indirectly) that she had written to his Holiness to propose that she should join the lord duke in Rome, but the reply had not leaned to the side of courtesy: his Holiness sending the excuse that his poverty made the reception of so eminent a lady an impossibility.

Now we had to accommodate our spirits with fortitude to the rigours of Lent. The lady Giovanna had returned during January to the government of Sinigaglia taking her younger daughter with her, but the lady Maria Varano remained in Urbino with her little son Sigismondo, whom she had placed under the tutorship of Fra Jacopo Sadoletto. This one was grave and holy as well as a great scholar, and it was he who made choice of the readings from the Fathers of the Church which had been the custom at dinner and at supper during Lent and Advent ever since the building of the palazzo. The weather was of very great severity, none of us ventured beyond the city walls, and nothing but the travelling mists broke the monotony of the patched snow on all the great expanse of uptossed undulations and the unrelieved whiteness of distant mountains jagged against the sky. Our lady had invented for her women the occupation of embroidery for a velvet coverlet for her own bed, but the manipulation of the gold thread was impossible except by the windows where the cold was unbearable, and we would too often leave our task and bring our stools as close as was possible to the hearth and its fire. Here messer Filippo Beroaldo would sometimes join us, creeping up from the library on the ground floor where he was engaged in transcription; and here the captain of the guard, Giovanni Andrea, would more boldly make his way. Beroaldo was from Florence and had been in the service of the Medici as secretary to the Cardinal, and Andrea was of Verona and had returned with the duke from his exile; he had a gallant bearing and a piquant tongue, and had won for himself a position in the court which was not justified by his birth. It was his

usage of the newel ramp as a means of ascent to us that set the example to messer Filippo, who had but to slip across from the library to the door at the bottom. The ramp came up from the outer court to the first floor and landed horse and rider in a space that lay between the wardrobe of the duchess and the long chamber with confronting windows which had been called the chamber of *Il Magnifico* ever since it, with the others adjoining, had been consigned to the use of the lord Lorenzo de' Medici when he visited Urbino in the time of the duke Federigo. It was here that the ladies of the court sat at their avocations, and, when the court life was in full being, it was here that the circle of the duchess gathered after supper, as is set forth by the lord Baldassare Castiglione in his book.

Our lady was not often with us in these winter months of which I speak. She spent many hours with her secretary in the cabinet beyond her bedchamber which gave out of the wardrobe, and from which a narrow stair led down to a door in the Cathedral close to the Montefeltro chapel. We realised that she used this stair constantly, and she made time too to give sittings for her portrait to the young Raffaello Sanzi,<sup>6</sup> who was returned to his native place from Perugia where he had been employed by the Oddi family and who was dwelling with his stepmother in the contrada del Monte. It was up this break-neck street on the farther side of the market place that one and another of us must now and again accompany the duchess when she went to the convent of Santa Chiara, where a half sister of the lord duke's was the Mother Superior. All would be swept clear for her passing, and wrapt in a cloak of grey miniver our lady would graciously acknowledge the greetings of those abroad: but she had no ready familiarity of speech, and never flung the word that makes rulers idolised. And so the days went on, and not completely without edification, for after supper there would sometimes be music, for which we would gather in the chamber adjoining the apartments of the lord duke. Like the chamber of *Il Magnifico* it gave off the end of the great hall, but it was ever the warmer of the two because it had fewer windows. It was named '*degli Angeli*' because of the frieze of dancing cupids across its chimney hood and the cupids with torches which are above. The background of the frieze was painted a celestial blue, and all was enhanced with gold, the walls being hung with a brocade of blue and gold in harmony: of all the fair rooms in the palazzo I ever thought this the fairest. Our lady was interested at this time in the string quartets and the motets of the Flemish composer Josquin de Près, and messer Jacopo di Sansecolo the master of the music did his best to arrange these for her pleasure. I thought that there

was sometimes a tinge of sardonic reserve in his manner, and a more perfected understanding of life has made me aware that our lady as audience to music must always gall the true musician: for her, the craft had its place as part of All-Loveliness, and so demanded susceptibility, and this she displayed with a rare grace which made all else secondary. For certain prevailing natures all things, even God Himself, must appear but as accessory. It was said of the lord Pietro Bembo that he could delight very good judges of malice, and he was sustaining that reputation when he pronounced one day in my hearing that if God in Heaven did not exist He would contrive to formulate Himself in order to have the rapture of beholding our lady at her prayers.

But before Lent was over letters came from Rome which were proof of her quiet puissance. They told that the marriage of the young lord Francesco della Rovere with the child Leonora Gonzaga was arranged, and later, that the ceremony had taken place by proxy and with great magnificence. This was in the month of March when it was proposed that we should move to the palazzo at Gubbio as soon as the gorges were passable. But the snow was long in melting, and moreover so many of the household were afflicted with ague and other ills of winter-time that it was not until May that we set out. That adventure through the mountains in the spring weather is an undefaced memory. My husband had written to me that the road was part of the Flaminian Way of old and that the tunnel in the Furlo pass had been the work of the Emperor Vespasian. I remember the turquoise green of the stream making its way over the white pebbles, the blue and purple of the campanulas by the wayside, the towering portals of the rocks, and the silvery outlines of the mountain ranges crossing and re-crossing one another. We came on the third day by Furlo and Cagli through the defiles and the mountain roads to Gubbio. It was at supper in the inn at Cagli that the Frate Sadoletto said he feared that plague as well as famine were the inheritance of the fierce winter weather for the duchy. He told us that the people were dying in great numbers and that the two public physicians had asked our lady for help in their labours. When the lord duke came from Rome to Gubbio in the heat of August he was greatly perturbed by the reports of all the distress. He himself was unwell, and he grew worse, and for a time his life was in danger.

Gubbio on the mountain side looked south over the great vale of the river Tiber, and I had my first glimpse of a world that was not the duchy. The palazzo was high above the roofs of the town. It matched

that of Urbino in size, and like Urbino it was in close proximity to the Cathedral whose patron saint, Urbaldo, had given our lord duke his name: for the lord Guidobaldo had been born here. The citizens never forgot that it had once been a Free City but the duke loved it best of all his fiefs I think, and it was ever his desire to embellish the palazzo further. He had brought carpets and hangings with him from Rome, together with wares of goldsmiths' craft, antique statues and medallions dug from the ruins there, and other sundry. The rooms of my husband and I on the second story were but sadly furnished, but they looked down on the piazza by the palazzo of the Consuls and that was full of the gaiety of movement. My husband had many acquaintances in the town and I often watched him in greeting and in conversation from my window. I found marriage to have a somewhat arbitrary complexion after it had been six months in abeyance. I can think of no formula for marriage except that what is important is a right adjustment of the unconscious and the art of worshipping beyond emotion. Marriage is at once a sacrament, an æsthetic, a commandment and a fulfilment: and if this implies that it is also a tension, it should be remembered that one can only play on tightened strings. The very existence of marriage as an indissoluble state consists in the preservation of this tension, in experience of the mystery of it all, and in preservation of the mystery. It is an austere destiny whose greatness lies in being joyously met.

The ability to put this into any words such as these (poor as they are) was of course never mine as long as marriage lasted: but across life I realise, almost as if vicariously, that my instincts and desires were of a magnanimous simplicity. During the months of separation from my husband I had made many a resolve to have more faith in myself and in life and to glorify its ritual more perfectly. Then he came back to me laughing from the society of the great and accomplished courtesans of Rome and I knew marriage to be more of a problem to a man than to a woman: it harms his soul more for he never tries to make a spiritual greatness out of it. I think I must have been very unhappy at this time. I remember how often I would slip across the narrow space that divided the palazzo from the Cathedral, and kneel in the low vault-like nave, and ask for every wifely virtue except a sense of humour. The lord Baldassare Castiglione came up the steep roadway one day as I was descending the tall flight of Cathedral steps cumbered with my skirts, and he took my hand to assist me and looked at me very kindly. I never spoke to him of matters that concerned me, but I ever felt that in him I had a friend.



In October the lord duke was said to be out of danger, and it was his desire to return to Urbino. This the physicians forbade because of the plague: over 300 souls had died in the city, and all who could had deserted it. It was commanded therefore to move the court to the castello at Fossombrone, and the return journey through the mountains was even more beautiful in autumn than it had been in spring. We came to the more open country at last, and instead of turning to the west to Urbino, we kept the road to the east, and, following the river, reached Fossombrone with the full moon high in the heaven. I remember well my first sight of the bridge in the brilliant moonlight and the towers of the town above it and the castello on the summit of the hill over all. The castello was not very commodious, and lodging had to be found in the town for all the courtiers except he whose duty it was to sleep in the bedchamber of the duke. They would climb the steep track before mid-day on their horses, clattering gaily under the portcullis into the courtyard, and they left after supper in the same guise. It was a baneful descent in the dark and our lady was reasonable when she said that to-and-fro was not a possibility for her ladies. I shared a chamber with others.

Fossombrone intoxicated me, and I believe that was in part because the sea could be seen from the eastern ramparts between the low hills at the end of the wide flat valley through which the river crept along. I did not betray to anyone the longing I had to reach what seemed not far away and to stand upon a seashore for the first time. The western outlook stirred to provocation of emotions too, for the mountains beyond the nearer green undulations stood up in blocks against the sky with deep clefts between them, and here the sun setting was ever a promise and a mystery and a pledge of more than passing life. The castello was a place of enchantment to me even before enchantment came.

Guests began to arrive. Some were from Venice, and I had as partner in the dance one evening a slim well-favoured gentleman who told me that he was of the Venetian family of the Bembo and his forename Pietro, and I found that I was laughing more than I was wont in his company. He would say in the later years of his prosperity that he came to the court with nothing but his wits and 6 ducats. His noble father had been of service to our lord and lady in Venice, where the family was of repute and of cousinship to queen Caterina Cornaro of Cyprus. Because of his wit (behind which he disguised a genuine love of learning) he was a notable addition to the levy of the duchess, and from the day of his arrival, other pastimes after supper were more frequently abandoned for disputations. It was on one of these November evenings, with our lady

enthroned, the flames of the hearth illuminating her and we in a half circle on either side of her chair, that I became conscious of a princely figure, somewhat sombrely attired and aloof in bearing, but whose regard unmistakably sought mine own. A pulse fluttered suddenly in my throat:—Do I not recollect it, and how I plucked without volition at the ornament hanging pendant between my breasts so that the slender chain came in twain: and how I sat on for a space with neither clear sight nor hearing. I was wearing a dress of yellow zetani with sleeves of green taffata lined with white fur, and I had a net of gold braid sewn with fine crystals over my hair. I realised presently when self-command was somewhat restored to me that the stranger must be the lord Giuliano de' Medici. There had been talk of his arrival and discussion about his lodging which had made me aware of a wish to honour him. I learnt that he was the guest of our lord and lady not for the first time, and that he was ever a welcome one.

I had not been so uninstructed in mine own home as to have been left unaware of the repute of the family of the Medici of the city of Florence in Tuscany.

Princes are the lamps that light this world, and I do not find it unreasonable that among princes there should be questioning when there gleams on a sudden in an unexpected quarter an unanticipated flame. The purity of the flame must ever be a matter for a noble watchfulness, and I was led to realise that it was with a certain wariness that the rulers of Urbino had regarded the inclusion of this Florentine family within the galaxy of potentates: for without the designation, and with but little of the ceremonial of sovereign-lords, these tradesmen had controlled the destinies of their reputed Republic for some generations. Knowledge that came to me later is set down here for the sake of clarity. There are naturally many ill-natured fables concerning a base origin, but Salvestro de' Medici, who in the year of our Lord 1378 was the author of the law by which perpetual flux in the constitution of the republic of Florence was for a time held in check, was no common huckster: plebeian necessarily, but with reputation as a substantial tradesman. The political equality of all classes of the community was his achievement, and it has been demonstrated to me that it was on this foundation that his family rose to despotism, for there was no machinery of government (such as was possessed by the republic of Venice) to prevent the monopoly of power by anyone who was sufficiently astute, cautious and wealthy.

Cosimo de' Medici, derived from Salvestro in the 4th degree, combined all three attributes with an ambition in which (as I judge) there was nothing culpable. He bought the interest of a sufficient number of public officers to secure the continuance of his own sway; but he was a destined ruler—one of those who arise to be the saviours of communities in hours of degradation. He had a commonsense that was regal, was gracious as well as shrewd, simple in manners and high of soul. *Pater Patriae* they called him. His only surviving son, Pietro, succeeded to his honours and estate, and his grandson Lorenzo, because of the heritage of power, and because of his own great gifts and his personality, was ceded the title of Magnifico, and took rank among princes.<sup>7</sup> He obtained for wife the lady Clarice of the great Roman family of Orsini, and by her he had 4 daughters, and 3 sons named Pietro, Giovanni, and Giuliano. PIETRO succeeded his father in Florence (having as wife the lady Alfonsina Orsini of the Naples family, and as children another Lorenzo and another Clarice). For GIOVANNI a Cardinal's hat had been obtained by his father at the age of seventeen, and GIULIANO, well-beloved by all his family, had always a delicacy of constitution. When I saw the lord Giuliano de' Medici for the first time in the court circle at Fossombrone in the year of our Lord fifteen hundred and five, the Medici had been for over ten years exiles from the Florentine state.

I had much of my information about them all from the lord Pietro Bembo who had spent his boyhood in Florence, his father being domiciled there as Venetian envoy. But the Republic of Florence has never wanted for busy chroniclers, and, later in my life, all the tangled tale of broiling strategy directed towards an end passionately desired but for ever vitiated becoming for me of essential interest, I made a scrutiny of all this era in the writings of messire Francesco Guicciardini, Niccolò Machiavelli, Jacopo Nardi, Francesco Vittori and others who have set forth the facts with the clarity of diabolism. No need that I re-state them even if I would. Suffice it to say that to me it seems proven that the community of Florence, always inherently apostate, had been hankering, even for some time before the death of Lorenzo Il Magnifico, for alternative to the dynastic sway of the family of Medici: and the lord Pietro having nothing of the puissance of his father, it was easy to make occasion for the Medici downfall out of the emergencies which arose when the king of France crossed the Appenines:—Charles of Anjou having chosen Tuscany as the route of his armies when he decided to advance his claim to the crown of Naples.<sup>8</sup> In all the medley of event which led to the forced flight of the Medici brothers and which saw king

Charles lodged in their palazzo by invitation of the citizens, it is difficult to disentangle motive of any distinction; but the part that the Dominican Girolamo Savonarola played then and thereafter needs, I think, more interpretation than it has received.

The existence to which their relegation condemned the Medici was necessarily one of poignant trial for the spirit. Exile is a real touchstone. At the very outset of their vagrancy they had been startled by the ingratitude which ever takes the soul unaware. The lord Giovanni Bentivoglio owed to the memory of their father such obligation that Bologna was, quite unreflectingly, the city to which the brothers turned for a preliminary asylum. I know that the reception which met them there was an experience which the lord Giuliano chose to bury in the grave of oblivion to which all baser recollections are wisely consigned. They had thenceforth to realise a re-adjustment of values in the world's estimation. None is friend to him who has nothing, said Marcus Argentarius, and the truth of this precept would have been completely proven to the fugitives if they had not had the experience of sanctuary in Urbino. Their father had ever cited it as the one city where the unbought grace of life was to be discovered. His own spirit had found response there, his visit had been a felicity to him, and his family had always been impressed, perhaps unconsciously, with the conception of the duchy as dissevered by quality from the rabble of other principalities. His daughter-in-law the lady Alfonsina Orsini felt secure in a reliance on its rulers' integrity: she had remained behind with her two children when her husband escaped from Florence, but, fearing for her infant son, she had contrived to have him taken out of the city in a basket by a trusted servant who had orders to convey him to Urbino. His pitiable arrival there (as I learned from my own mother) had displayed all that was most delectable in the nature of our lady, and when, unheralded, his father and uncles followed him, they had received a welcome which, dispirited as they were, moved them deeply. The range of rooms which lay behind the throne-room facing the great stair, and which were part of the old palazzo of the Signoria, were given up to them: and as years went on they returned to these rooms often as to their home. I had heard talk of them all in my growing years, for the charm of the Medici manner engendered a universal liking for them.

I speculate if every woman can look back across the years to apprenticeship in love with my own complete detachment: and if every

woman who can do so is moved to my own impersonal compassion. I see myself bewildered in a world of small daily events suddenly suffused with the deepest meaning. My gossamer soul had accidentally lighted upon bliss, and the existence of a God in Heaven was proved because I needed Him so much to share it with me: I had found the authentic link with Heaven in another's personality and had complete assurance that in the day of judgment all powers would necessarily be on my side.... But our conceit that we understand the immutable emotions of the past is but poorly founded, nor do we venerate them once they have ceased to affect the future. They seem but as wolves ravening in a black fog, and the fog only lifts on the effort we make to arrange the outward circumstances in their rightful order in our memory.

Christmas and the new year (1506) came and went at Fossombrone, and I began to be aware that I lived in no dream but in what was to be a creative performance in time. The lord Giuliano with his gentle melancholy was, I realised, exercising a caution which rivalled mine own. What did caution serve but to make us each other's hermitage? As I sat with my needle rapt and silent, I would often have a sudden fear that the lady Emilia Pio da Carpi might have the surmises of her experience; although there was little actual intercourse between the ladies of the duchess and the friends of the lord duke who were much with him in his own chamber, and their talk so we understood often anxiously concerned with the warlike plans of his Holiness. In February the duke was so much better, and reports from Urbino so favourable, that the court moved back there. After 8 months of absence we were all glad to find ourselves again in what the lord Pietro Bembo, seeing it for the first time, designated the toy capital. That he could walk the circuit of the ramparts in half an hour or so was with him a matter of much mirth.

Mirth and enjoyment were the measure of our days and nights after our return, and four pipers were hired from Ferrara for the dancing that was ever interspersed with the other pastimes and the disputation after supper. Preparations for the carnival, too, engrossed us all. The lord Baldassare and the lord Cesare had written for it a play of a pastoral character, borrowing the style from messer Poliziano's *Orfeo* and the lord Pietro and messer Bernardo Accolti were told by the lady Emilia that they were jealous when they twitted the authors with florid display of their knowledge of Horace, Ovid, and Catullus: our lady saying evenly that the influence she herself traced was that of Petrarch. The

authors themselves took the 2 chief parts of Iola and Dameta, and I was one of the group of the shepherdesses. The forenoon of every passing day was soon given up to rehearsal in the theatre on the ground floor. The lord Giuliano would sometimes come in and seat himself, and he would smile in his grave way at the presentation of himself as the wise and learned shepherd skilled in all the arts whose praises were heard on every shore and by every fountain, and who came lovelorn from Etruria singing the words of his own sonnet *se fusse il passo mio così veloce*.<sup>9</sup> It was of course ever a convention to depict our lady herself as the loadstar of all hopeless passion: otherwise I do not unto this hour understand this implication, for even had they guessed anything at this time (and it was impossible) the authors were incapable of doing me such disservice with my husband.

So far the words that I had exchanged with the lord Giuliano could have been counted on my ten fingers for he never drew near to me nor spoke to me before others, and if he ever succeeded in an encounter with me alone I found myself even more tongue-tied than he was. So that when midnight came on Shrove Tuesday and the music in the great hall ceased, it was with a beating heart that I saw him take his stand by the doorway that gave on the landing where the great stair came up to the throne-room and went on to the second storey. I realised that it was his meaning to intercept me. His eyes had been on me all the evening as I danced in the moresca, and I, fevered with fatigue and flattery, and with a new loathing for all the meaningless gaiety, knew that I had lost my self-control. I stood dishevelled in the crowd, with the rose-coloured kirtle of my shepherdess' dress stained with wine which the lord Gaspar Pallavacini had spilled at supper, and with my vest torn and slipped from my shoulder. Yet I think it was not consciousness of my plight but rather blind instinct which led me to retreat to the other end of the hall and from thence to slip through the farther doorway. I sped along the corridor which led past the chambers of the lord Francesco and of madama Varano his sister, and round the corner past the three dining-rooms; and then at the angle where the dining-rooms joined the apartments of the lord Giuliano himself I scrambled blindly in the darkness up the service stair that climbed from the kitchen to the top of the palazzo. So, by this unaccustomed route I reached our room. I awoke next morning with a throbbing head to find that for me Lent had verily dawned: for not once during its wet and windy days did the lord Giuliano seem conscious of my existence: and, even at High Mass on Easter Day, although he contrived to be very near me in the throng

around the altar, he evaded all salutation on the steps of the Cathedral afterwards. And in the following week, without exchanging look or word with me, he went away to Rome with the young lord Francesco Maria della Rovere and accompanied by the lord Baldassare and the count Louis of Canossa.

The lord Castiglione returned alone in May to prepare for his visit to England as envoy to acknowledge the Order of the Garter which the lord duke had received from the king of that island.<sup>10</sup> We questioned him one evening if he did not dread the journey, and the so dangerous voyage, recalling to him, somewhat unkindly I think, that king Filippo and queen Joanna of Castile had been wrecked on the English shore on their way from Zeeland to Spain. The lord Baldassare said smiling that he hoped for better fortune, and that moreover he did not feel that England would be a complete desolation to him because he was to stay in the house of messer Polidoro Vergilio, vice-collector of Peter's pence in London, and actually a native of Urbino; while king Henry's master of the ceremonies the lord Silvestro Gigli, Bishop of Worcester, was of good Italian lineage too. The lord Baldassare departed in August with a large suite and taking with him the picture of San Giorgio piercing the dragon with his spear which had been painted by Raffaello Sanzi as a present from our duke to his majesty of England—San Giorgio being, I learned, the patron saint of that kingdom.<sup>11</sup> And so it happened that the lord Baldassare was absent from the duchy when his Holiness the lord Pope, with 24 prince Cardinals and a great company of men-at-arms, came to be the guest of our lord and our lady in September (1506).

The lord duke himself escorted the Holy Father to Urbino. Unwillingly enough, he had set out at the end of August with all the soldiers he could levy to help in the campaign he had feared for so long. With the exception of a small war which the state of Florence was waging against Pisa, all Italy was at peace at this time, for France ruling in Milan, and Spain ruling in Naples, had concluded a truce at Blois, and the lesser principalities had become unimportant as military powers. But, as the duke Guidobaldo had learned in the previous year, the Pope was not to be moved from following in the footsteps of the Borgias and the recurrent ambition of establishing a vaster papal state, and, having secured the tranquillity of Rome in his absence, he suddenly arose in the great heat

of summer like the god Mars, and took the field: he being at this time 64 years of age. His only possible path was northwards, for Naples hemmed in the papal states completely on the south. He advanced by Formello and Viterbo to Orvieto, and here our lord duke joined forces with him and was able to persuade the Baglioni to surrender Perugia without bloodshed. Leaving Perugia in the care of our lady's brother the marquis of Mantua who had arrived there with auxiliaries, his Holiness next proposed the subjection of Bologna, and it was held to be nothing but curiosity which occasioned the divergence to Urbino.

The preparations made to do Him honour who was thus honouring the duchy so greatly were necessarily hurried and taxed all tempers. Carts with an armed escort were sent across the mountains to borrow gold and silver plate and other trappings from both Mantua and Ferrara, and all worked hard not only within but without the palazzo. It was decided to take down all the city gates, and the magistrates undertook that not only the decoration of the houses by day, but the illumination of the town and the surrounding hills at night, should be sights of great splendour. Our lady had wished to assure herself that the ceremonial dress of the magistracy was not too shabby, and I shall ever remember the good burghers as they stood anxiously before her in their cloaks of mulberry coloured silk with yellow collars, and their beaver hats with the gold cords and tassels. But I must not make an inventory of detail, although it all recalls itself irrepressibly. I had my own task to accomplish, and this was to unstitch the Montefeltro arms from the centre of the velvet coverlet which we had now completed for the duchess, and to replace them with the della Rovere papal arms which had to be embroidered in haste and with all diligence. It had been decided to allot the chambers of the lord duke to his Holiness, and these contained the bed recess of the late duke Federigo, painted with a forest of trees within and emblazoned without: and when my task was completed (only just in time) madonna Costanza Fregosa helped me to carry the coverlet and to lay it over the couch inside the recess. I saw the duke's cabinet too for the first time, panelled with tarsia work below walls hung with Cordova leather stamped in gold: and we took licence and went down the narrow stair in the south tower to the private chapel lined with marbles where a crystal and gold crucifix that had come with the gear from Mantua had been placed, and yet lower to the bath, where we noted that the fire was already laid on the hearth of the dressing room and that the vessels for boiling the water were already filled.



Our lady stood to receive the Pontiff under the arcade of the inner court, wearing a robe of crimson and gold damask faced with marten and a long chain of pearls and rubies. I thought her gravity too marked, but her graciousness to the Holy Father (who was of ungainly bearing) was without flaw. We had our commands to be in close attendance, so that I was forced to follow up the stairway, and it was not until I caught sight of him presently in the throng in the great hall above, that I could make certain that the lord Giuliano had really arrived in the papal retinue. My husband had told me, while we were attiring in the lodging to which we had been relegated, that the Medici was returning in the company of his brother the Cardinal, and I had made choice of a gown of white and silver tabi and had put a mesh of pearls over my hair. My husband had scrutinised me with his jesting air, and he took a string of scarlet coral and hung it over my breasts and bade me redden my cheeks and my lips a little. As I stood there under his gaze I felt myself to be too young—not with the youth of gaiety and rebellion, of swift-ness and delight, but with the youth that is afraid and dry-throated under the breath of all the fears and dangers of its inextinguishable demands.

The days of the visit seemed to be nothing but a vast confusion. Cardinals and captains thronged all the courts and corridors, and it was almost impossible to distinguish individuals; but I had been at pains to discover the Cardinal de' Medici and that he bore no resemblance to his younger brother. And then, presently, I encountered him more nearly. He had desired an audience of our lady and she had dismissed us all from attendance, keeping only the lady Emilia with her. We were standing poised like a flock of brightly coloured birds at the head of the great stair when the Cardinal, with his secretary messer Bernardo Dovitzi at one elbow and his cousin, the Prior of Capua, Giulio de' Medici, at the other, came into sight below and upwards towards us. He was laughing, and the laughter had a quality of its own: subdued and mellow, it had nevertheless a luxuriance—it is not easy to ensnare it in words: it differed from the laughter of others as the Cardinal himself differed from his fellow-men. Tall and full-bodied, on legs that seemed inadequate, with a neck which matched his bulk, and with prominent eyes which had no lambency, he had yet a kind of animal nobility. We had our proper reverences for him as he mounted the last steps, and he stopped and said a few words of no meaning but which left each individual among us smiling and fluttered, for nature had endowed him by inheritance with the transcendent gift of pleasing. The Dovitzi be-

hind him looked at us all with his amused and intelligent eyes, but the Prior Giulio de' Medici had the air of effacement which, as I came to realise, did not mean lack of ability.

During the years that had passed since the 3 Medici brothers had first ridden the road to Urbino, Giovanni the second, and the shrewdest of them all, had played his difficult part with undeviating propriety. It was natural enough that the eldest, the lord Pietro de' Medici, should not have acquiesced in the fact of his lost inheritance, but he was ever wanting in judgment and seven years wore themselves away in fruitless struggle. There were, so I understand, no less than 4 attempts organised to regain Florence, shifting policies making the help, now of this, then of that lord or prince available. Our own lord duke had lent his aid, and once, at the head of hired Venetian infantry, he swept down through the passes into Casentino, and, but that the stars in their courses had decided otherwise, the Medici would there and then have regained their dominance. For the lord Pietro this was never to be. I learn from the pages of messer Francesco Guicciardini that, although the support of the French king had been secured through the graces of the lord Giuliano, who was a *persona grata* at the French court, a last attempt failed owing to the conflicting scheming of the lord Cesare Borgia: and two years later all Medici striving came, for the nonce, to an end because of the inglorious death of the lord Pietro himself. He had entered, of policy, into the service of the French, and was drowned by the upsetting of a barge on the river Garigliano during the operations against the Spaniards for the ever-contended possession of Naples. His son Lorenzo, living in Rome with his mother and his sister Clarice, was twelve years old at this time.

I can suspect that the death of his brother was no great affliction for the Cardinal Giovanni. The avowals to me of the lord Giuliano, and knowledge gleaned later in life in Florence itself, convince me that the heir of Lorenzo Il Magnifico was (as has so often to be related of the offspring of great men) unbalanced in character and not richly endowed with wisdom, and Pietro no longer in existence meant the removal of a barrier to the restoration of the Medici fortunes. As I visualise the Cardinal, already so bulky in figure, slowly mounting the shallow treads of the great stair at Urbino, I visualise too the enduring purpose that lay behind the surface of his urbanity and placable address. His goal was the Papacy. Since the age of seven when he had received the tonsure after

the rite of Confirmation, that had been the destiny towards which his feet had ever been directed: in childhood by the ambitious intention of his father, and in adolescence and maturity by his own complete acquiescence. If this purpose could be brought to flower the restoration of his family to Florence would be a thing comparatively easy of accomplishment, and although, as I understand, he was never backward in lending what countenance was seemly to the endeavours of his elder brother, yet there can be little doubt but that the event of the river Garigliano meant a notable melioration of his own prospects.

No travail on the part of my tutor, nor tears shed over the grammar of Theodorus Gaza,<sup>12</sup> ever resulted in making me into a scholar, but I have retained shreds of Greek literature in my memory, and I recall that one of the Seven Wise Men said that change of affairs for the worse is the hardest of all fates to endure. The Cardinal Giovanni had endured this fate with unassailable urbanity. I have been told that even at the lowest ebb of his fortunes he never allowed himself to show any despondency, and a saying of his has been preserved that great men were the work of Providence and that nothing could be wanting to them if they were not wanting to themselves. His decorum was the result of the careful training of his youth, but his liberality, and his love for literature and the arts and for spaciousness of life were a heritage. Although (as his brother once related to me) he was in these years often so beset for money that he must pledge the silver vessels upon his table in order to give a supper of which they should have been the ornaments, yet he never failed to keep a certain state: he had a veritable genius for extricating himself from his embarrassments, and he would inevitably emerge from his pecuniary difficulties with a dexterity that was miraculous. Expertness of a high order was moreover displayed by him in his relationship to succeeding Pontiffs. In the preliminary years of exile he had deemed it inadvisable to occupy his palazzo in Rome, for the Borgia were implacable in animosity to the Medici. Moreover I judge that concurrence in the domestic life of the Vatican would not have been easy for him, because, notwithstanding his appreciation of the society of witty and beautiful women, his life was always outwardly disciplined where they were concerned. It was such considerations which moved him to leave Italy for the time being, and with his cousin Giulio (bastard of his uncle Giuliano who had been murdered in the Pazzi conspiracy) and with ten other friends he set out to travel in foreign lands, the party going by way of Venice into Germany and from there to Flanders. The Cardinal thereon had the project of adventuring the voyage to England,

but he had allowed wiser councils to prevail, and he and his companions made their way from Rouen leisurely-wise through all the country of France to the port of Marseilles. From thence the Cardinal repaired to the home of his sister Maddelena and of her husband Francesco Cibo in Genoa.

During his absence much of the water of the Tiber had flowed under the arches of the bridge of San Angelo. Moreover he had come back to Italy with a prestige greatly enhanced. As the son of his father he had been received with cordiality and magnificence at the court of the emperor Maximilian, and at that of his son Philip, governor of the Low Countries. It had become inconvenient to Pope Alexander to have the Cardinal as an enemy, and he was encouraged to reside in Rome where he was treated with outward respect and attention. Then the day dawned when the Borgia prerogative was ended, and between the Cardinal and the lord Galeotto, beloved and prevailing nephew of the new della Rovere Pope, was a friendship that was ardent and which had long existed. Circumstances seemed to be beginning to combine at last in favour of Medici fortune, and if the Cardinal, remembering himself a pensioner in the Urbino palazzo, were disposed to cheerfulness as he made his way to the presence of its mistress, it need not be a matter for criticism. Yet the laughter assaulting the ear by accident had been somehow displeasing, and the impression made upon me was singular. Laughter is intelligence and does not spring from feeling.

The lord Pietro Bembo spoke of the Cardinal with some freedom that very night. During the papal invasion he was lodging in the same dwelling in the town as ourselves, and he walked back with us there, and I heated and spiced some wine while he sat brooding upon the chest in our chamber. His talk was of life and its disproportionate desires, and the dim light, and the hour, and the wine he had already drunk earlier in the evening induced more frankness than was his wont. Disdain for the Medici was in his Venetian blood, but he begged us to regard him, not as a fool, nor as unaware of the Medici capacity for sustaining the prestige which always means eventual triumph. The Cardinal would without doubt be Pope, and he would in his turn become the maker of Cardinal princes. For the princes of the Church life had its meaning, because it meant mastery of one's world: and that, the lord Pietro averred, was the one permissible condition for agreeableness of demeanour. With the goblet given into his hand he fixed his bloodshot eyes on the casement already grey with the breaking dawn, and he said that he had once dreamed that to climb to the top of learning and

literature and to find all there transfigured by the ascent would be to live beatifically; but he knew now that to live beatifically was the evasion of life itself. He stood as he surrendered the goblet, and with his hands on his hips declaimed that for him was no choice either of the mastery or of the beauty of life, and that to be poor, and to serve, and to see no escape except by sycophancy was to endure hell. He turned at the doorway with a laugh however, saying that although he knew Fortune would never advance him of her good will yet she might perchance choose to show her omnipotence by stooping down to him: and it was his single hope. When the door had closed on him my husband commented that the lost paradise of the court of Ferrara had something to do with this infelicity of soul. I knew that the lord Bernardo Bembo had been Venetian envoy in Ferrara at the time the lady Lucrezia Borgia had gone there as the bride of the lord Alfonso d'Este, and that his son Pietro, then 26 or 27 years of age, had been there too. I knew what was whispered, and that Ferrara was now debarred to the lord Pietro. But although venomous tongues had likely gone astray in the matter of the lady Lucrezia and himself, yet he was of a certainty just now like a winged boat rudderless on the perilous seas of ambition and desire.

Next day Urbino seemed to be an empty city, for the Pope had gone, all the Cardinals had gone, and our lord duke, in command of the men-at-arms, had gone too. A silence that could almost be felt succeeded to the turmoil.

We heard quickly that the duke was lying very ill in the camp at Imola, and that the marquis of Gonzaga had been made Gonfalonier of the Church in his stead. He came back to us in February still suffering greatly, and he brought with him the lord Giuliano, as well as the lord Baldassare who had joined him in Bologna on his return from England. These two had much to relate to the duchess and to us all, and other diversions were forgotten as we gathered round the hearth on many succeeding evenings to hear, not only about the country of England and its king, but about the entry of his Holiness into the capital of Romagna. Both narrators seemed to be weightier in mind than when we had seen them last. The lord Baldassare had been impressed by the sapience of the king of England. He told us of the sobriety of his court and of the economy of splendour in the midst of indisputable riches. The order and purpose of life in the island were very evident, he said, and if the Englishman was God's servant he was ever

very much his own man as well. This was not to say that manners there were not urbane and polished, and they had a pleasant freedom, but he had seen no evidence of domestic affection either for wife or children as here in Italy, and while he had been aware of widespread bawdry he had never beheld a man in love. The king had given him for himself a pony no bigger than a large dog of a breed which came from an island in the very far north, and, moreover, a great chain of beaten gold, with a pendant which had a curious device of 2 portcullises and the rose of the house of Tudor. Much else he told us. Indeed if it had not been that the duchess herself was curious, I believe the talk would have been all of London and of Bologna not at all.

Bologna had been surrendered to the Pope by its citizens, they having previously secured the departure of the Bentivoglio. It was no military victory, but his Holiness had designed a military triumph to rival those of the Cæsars. This had taken place in November before the lord Baldassare arrived there, so it was the lord Giuliano from whom we sought the details, and the lord Pietro Bembo rallied him one evening respectfully on his lack of enthusiasm for them. The lord Giuliano made answer that as a Florentine he had a liking for spectacles, and he might have accepted the pageantry without reflection if it had not been for the presence in Bologna of a scholar from Rotterdam, one Desiderius Erasmus.<sup>13</sup> With this man he had made acquaintance, and it was through his eyes that he had beheld the Pope advancing on a festal car under a purple canopy like a second Julius Cæsar while ducats were scattered among the people: Cardinals and the Curiali preceded and followed him like the senators of old, and nobles of Rome and of many other cities completed the resplendent procession: the sarcasm of the Netherlander had been restrained, but it had led to more than one conversation, in which, after his subsequent arrival, the lord Castiglione had joined. The duchess showed herself unwilling that the matter should be discussed further for the lady Maria Varano was present, but the lord Bembo was earnest to know of the winds of the spirit that were blowing beyond the confines of Italy (thus he expressed it) and messer Dovitzi (who had returned with the lord Giuliano) said that this Erasmus had great learning and a fine humour, and that it had been enlightening to have the growth of the Papacy in history set forth by one with so clear an eye and so sharp a tongue. He had shown that the fall of the western empire had meant the danger of the effacement of order and civilisation, and the Bishop of Rome, being then alone in a position of opportunity and authority, had become the champion of the law of righteousness:

thus all good men naturally aimed at increasing the beneficent power of the Roman See, and the growth of its power had been wholly rational and admirable for many centuries. But, during the adaptability of the Papacy to society, the character of Christianity itself had become transformed: this at least was the tenet of the Fleming (said m<sup>rs</sup> Dovitzi): he holding that on the simplicity of the creeds an elaboration of life and thought had been built up which was sensuous and pagan and was yet imposed on the conscience of all as an obligation.

The lord Castiglione looked somewhat troubled during this discourse, because lack of veneration for usage always seemed to him (so I opine) not quite well-born. He interrupted presently that he thought the northern climate inclined somewhat to tediousness of temper, and Bernardo Dovitzi said that m<sup>rs</sup> Erasmus was no schismatic, but, being impressed that men had learnt to seek the true Aristotle in the original text purged from Arabic insertions by Leonicus of Padua, his intention was to edit a text of the four Gospels and the epistles of the holy Apostles from Greek manuscripts which had been collected by the Dominicans at Basel, and afterwards to make a new translation into Latin: he being of the opinion that the version of the learned San Geronimo which was in general use was in many respects erroneous. Thus would all men be able to come to a better knowledge of the Lord Christ in His own life and words.<sup>14</sup> The lord Giuliano then said quietly that this denunciation was no new thing, seeing that the scholar Lorenzo Valla, in the time of his own great-grandfather, had pronounced all the ancient translations to be faulty in style and in rendering and had no better word for the version of the English monks eight centuries ago:<sup>15</sup> and Pietro Bembo interposed that there must inevitably be mistranslation, for Greek being the more flexible tongue an accurate rendering into Latin could never be possible. The lord Giuliano acquiesced in this, and, resuming, he went on to say that Desiderius Erasmus was at heart a humanist, and his main interest literature, but that the literature which happened to interest him was religious. Messer Dovitzi agreed that their new friend Desiderius did perhaps love religion a good deal for the sake of letters, and that he was not a religious thinker and was without creative ideas: yet no one could doubt his sincere conviction that God alone lends our life possibility, and that God must remain hidden but for the Lord Christ, who was the breaking through of the Word of God into the profane life. Fra Jacopo Sadoletto, who had been sitting silently and a little apart, here observed that we were too prone to think of God as the projection of our own estimate and desire, and that he should welcome a new

Greek text, and also a new Latin translation if they would help men to simple surrender to a transcendent Divine Event.

We all realised that this discussion was beginning to overstep the bounds imposed by our lady, and presently she commanded decisively to bring the tambourines, and we showed the lord Giuliano the captivating dance called *Zephyr and Venus* which the lady Lucia and the lord Gaspar were practising to perform before his Holiness on his return. For the Pope designed to come again to Urbino on his way back to Rome; and in March he came in detestable weather, for one night's lodging only, travelling this time in small state, and accompanied but by 4 Cardinals. These being his own nephew, the Cardinal della Rovere; the Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga, who was our lady's brother; and the Cardinals of Aragon and Narbonne.

I had several near glimpses of Pope Julius on this lesser occasion. I heard it argued in a shattered Rome twenty years later that he had been the greatest Pontiff since his Holiness Gregory VII, in that he too had cherished a vision of the destiny of Holy Church; and that in the figure of Moses which he had commanded for his tomb, he had seen himself leading Her from degradation and showing Her from afar the Promised Land. It was true, so it was said, that he seemed to have led the Church with a sword which never left his grasp, but, in all the great works to which he set them, he would have Donato Bramante, Michelagnolo Buonorrotti and Raffaello Sanzi convey the conception of humanity consecrating all its faculties and all its culture to union with God, and of the soul, after its fall, led throughout the ages, and shepherded by many roads, to our Lord Christ: this being a transition in the realm of ideas as great as the step taken by the Holy Apostle S. Paolo when he released the community from the customs of the Jews. It may be so; and all this not only the rhetoric of disappointment with later Pontiffs. But my personal memory is of him as he stood by the fireplace near the stairway door in the great hall on the morning of his departure. He was in travelling gear, and he was holding his furred gloves towards the fire before he drew them over his hands. I recollect no one who has seemed to me so to embody the restlessness of being alive. His head was bowed on his shoulders, his long beard was white, and his forehead deeply furrowed; but the blood coursed in his cheeks and his eyes were like meteors. That he ever challenged the night before the sun had run its course, and in the night ever prayed that it were morning was the lasting impression he left with me. The lord Francesco Maria was to ride with



his uncle as far as Cagli, and he was just within the door with a plumed helmet in his hand. I noted idly that neither the younger nor the elder della Rovere was capable of standing quite still.

The Pope's going was on the 5th day of March in the year of our Lord 1507, and the conceit of the lord Baldassare Castiglione has been to fix on this very evening for the first of the disputations in his *Cortegiano*, and with the art of authorship he has condensed what were incessant themes into the concrete talk of 4 evenings only. I have a copy of the book and I sometimes turn its pages quite blindly, almost scenting again in my imagination the odorous cedarwood burning on the hearth in the great chamber. What was always noteworthy to me then, and has remained as vision, was the odd dominance of women's raiment as we sat there: the skirts all swollen out and overflowing the benches and taking on an importance—they alone seemed important, and all personality lost, even that of the duchess herself: on her sedilia, in her robes of damask, she would look as if her superiority were only that of ceremonial, in some way just the creation of the assemblage itself. I do not think I was alone in sometimes welcoming a relaxed tension when she would withdraw to her wardrobe at an early hour, and as the lord Baldassare has recorded, the summer dawn would then on occasion find us not yet abed. I recall perfectly the June morning when, after a long night of diversions, the lord Pietro exclaimed to those of us still dancing that we must see the sunrise. We crossed the great hall into the twilight of the corridor above the inner court, and my husband went ahead into the darkness of the dining rooms at the end of it, and unbarred shutters and unlatched a window: we crowded on to the loggia outside, our chatter hushed for the nonce.<sup>16</sup>

*Then when the windows were opened on the side of the palace which has its prospect towards the high peak of Mount Catria, they saw already in the east a fair morning like unto the colour of roses, and all the stars vanished saving only the dear governess of the heaven, Venus, which escapeth the bounds of night and day; and from which there seemed to come a zephyr filling the air with crisp coolness so that the choruses of joyous birds began to quicken among the murmuring woods of the hills near at hand.*

All will agree that this is said with felicity, and there is much else of beauty in the recital of those occasions when the talk was of love and the lord Pietro Bembo its chief pedagogue, hortatory and explicit. But what makes the book a manual of meditation for myself is that, in

its pages, it is the lord Giuliano de' Medici to whom is given the task of setting forth the portrait of the perfect gentlewoman to be set alongside that of the well-bred nobleman. If he really said all that is there imputed to him, he must have meant it as homage to an adroitness of which I was not capable. If I betrayed myself in neither word nor gesture as he commends, it was not that I found an open love too hard a matter, but that I was conscious of a strange indifference to his bodily presence, and that I needed neither word, nor glance nor lightest contact. At this time I never looked beyond the authenticity which his mere existence gave to life, and he just happened for me over and over again as he had first happened in the firelight at Fossombrone. It is illuminating to recognise that, while for me it was all a wordless trance, he had his own feet planted on the earth. In the book the duchess and the lady Emilia challenge him to fashion the ideal woman, and he is not backward in the exploitation of phrases.

*~~~~~It doth well in a woman to have a womanly sweetness in every gesture of hers, that in going, standing, and speaking whatever she lusteth, may always make her appear a woman without any likeness of man. But many virtues of the mind I think to be as necessary for a woman as for a man. Likewise nobleness of birth, and avoiding affectation or curiosity, to have a good grace of nature in all her doings; to be mannerly witty and prudent; not haughty, not ill-tongued.~~~~~And methink beauty is more necessary in her than in the Courtier, for there is great lack in the woman that wanteth beauty. She ought also to be more circumspect, and to take better heed that she take no occasion to be ill-reported of, and behave herself that she be not only not spotted with any fault but not so much as with suspicion. Because a woman hath not so many ways to defend herself from slanderous reports as hath a man.*

*I say that for her that liveth in Court methink belongeth a charm of conversation, that she may entertain all kind of men with talk worth hearing, and applied to the time and place, and to the degree of the person she communeth with. Accompanying with calm and quiet manners a ready wit.~~~~~Let her beware of praising herself indiscreetly or being too tedious. Let her not go mingle with laughing talk matters of gravity. Let her not foolishly take upon her to know that she knoweth not, but soberly seek to be esteemed for that she knoweth.*

*Above all it is requisite for her to know what belongeth to communication of love: and it were first needful to teach her to know them that make pretence to love and them that love indeed. Afterward for being answerable in love or no I believe she ought not to be guided by any other man's will but by her own self. She should not be light of credence that she is beloved: nor be like some that*

*feign they do not understand him that communeth with them of love that is rather an alluring than a withdrawing of themselves. I will have my woman of the palace to shun believing that whoso talketh of love loveth her any whit the more~~~~~but in case the communication be such that she cannot feign not to understand it, she shall take it all for a merry device. For when this love cannot end in matrimony, the woman must needs have always the remorse and pricking that it had of unlawful matters. And if this mischance hap to the woman of the palace that the hatred of her husband or the love of another bendeth her to love, I will have her to grant her lover nothing else but the mind: nor at any time to make him any certain token of love, neither in word or gesture, nor any other way that he may be fully assured of it~~~~~An open love is too hard a matter.*

It was a web of talk, spun endlessly, and I forgive myself that I often sat there insensible to the clash of wits; although sometimes with a roused discomfort when one or another interposed lewdly. I would glance involuntarily at our lady when someone became too artless, but it was only to realise what it was in me that she found inconvenient. I shrank especially from innuendo at this time for many were oozing with leers because all knew that the lady Maria Varano was with child by sir Giovanni Andrea and that this, and not the great heat, was the reason that she went away for a space to Fossombrone.

That summer (1507) must be remembered above all others for its heat. There had been a storm at Eastertime, but otherwise no rain for many months, and the springs were all exhausted, the river beds dry, and in July even the great well in the market place failed, and all the water for use in the palazzo had to be carted from wells in the country, while all over the duchy the grain for bread had to be ground by hand. It was on account of these many inconveniences that our lady expressed herself glad that a visit which the emperor Maximilian had proposed to make to Urbino on his way to Rome had come to nothing. It would seem that he wished to receive the imperial crown in Rome like the emperors of old, because, his son Philip having died, he was anxious about the succession in Spain and in the empire of his grandchild, the boy Charles. But his Holiness feared that this project would set all Italy in commotion and obstacles were raised, and, great as the glory of the emperor's visit would have been, we all had a sense of delivery.<sup>17</sup> The hot weather was at all times bad for the lord duke's gout, and he was ailing, and that ever gave a feeling of tension.

In August the Cardinal de' Medici came from Rome bringing with

him messer Dovitzi and messer Filippo Beroaldo, now also in his service, and all of them, with the lord Giuliano and the lord Baldassare, were much in the duke's rooms. My husband told me that there were negotiations afoot for a marriage of the lord Baldassare with the lady Clarice de' Medici the niece of his Eminence and who was living with her mother, the lady Alfonsina, in Rome. It was m<sup>rs</sup> Dovitzi (now generally called da Bibbiena) who had conceived the plan, for he knew that the lord Baldassare, for whom he had a warm affection, had long wished to improve his position by a profitable marriage. This alliance was a more important one than the lord Baldassare could have expected, but the dowry itself was so small that my husband said it would not even pay the Castiglione's debts. Our lady presently wondered to us, how, on her side, the lady Alfonsina de' Medici had been brought to consent to the proposal; she did not think that anything would come of the affair, although the lord duke advised it for his friend. (And so it proved.)

Towards the end of the month of September the lord Francesco Maria della Rovere, who was now seventeen years of age, returned to us from his own fief of Sinigaglia, and in the week before his arrival the lady Maria came back from Fossombrone, and the brother and sister shared between them the set of rooms in the south corridor lying beyond the chamber degli Angeli. It had ever been a matter of speculation with the curious whether the lord Francesco knew of madama's friendship for sir Giovanni. This one had greatly distinguished himself in the papal campaign, and the lord duke had given him the order of the Golden Spur and had bestowed on him the fief of Sasso, the castello of Sassobara and some mills on the Foglia. The position of the Veronese had been so much enhanced that it was freely said that the assurance which had elevated him should support him in matrimonial ambition too. He was handsome and polished as well as merry and fearless, and he was a favourite not only in the court, where he now had an established place, but in the town, and the duchy at large, and among all the soldiery. The lord Francesco Maria had a young jealousy of his prowess and his popularity, and it was tacitly agreed that it were better on every count that he should remain in ignorance of what had come to pass. But madama and Andrea could not play at prudence, and I wondered if others shared my certainty that their trysting place was now the bath and dressing rooms which were on the navel stair in the south tower under the apartments of the lord duke. The drought had brought about their desuetude, and I bethought one day how easy they were to come

at for both the lovers: as master of the horse sir Giovanni could make use of the door at the bottom of the stair through which water for the bath was carried from the stable well, while the road for the lady Maria was from the loggia outside her wardrobe, a doorway giving entrance to the stair in the twin tower and another loggia linking the towers together. Messer Dovitzi had once made jest in my hearing that the palazzo had been constructed with an eye to every human frailty.

I said nothing, even to my husband, about my surmise, and this was a matter of thankfulness to me when, in the month of November, the lord Francesco did sir Giovanni to death and it was clear that someone must have babbled to him. All had noticed that the mood of blitheness in which he had returned from Sinigaglia had given way to malcontent and to swashbuckler airs, that he was, however, careful to conceal from the lord duke. Ill-chance had it that our lord, with the lord Giuliano, the Castiglione and others went away for a week to Castel Durante to hunt the red deer, and a stripling has ever the temptation to prove himself a better man of the world than his elders. We were sitting one evening with the duchess in the chamber degli Angeli listening to some music by Petrucci on a new clavichord that had been made by Lorenzo da Pavia and which had just arrived from Venice, when we became aware of a turmoil in the corridor hard by where the lord Francesco's apartments lay. It was known that the youth had invited Andrea to supper with him, and our lady rose with instant apprehension. The corridor had the sound of running feet and was empty when she reached it, but there were voices behind a locked door on which she smote imperiously. It was opened to her after long parley behind it, and we, huddled outside, had the dreadful glimpse of sir Giovanni on the floor there. The duchess faced round on our horror with an uplifted hand commanding quietude, and then she entered the room alone and shut the door. A messenger riding through the night brought back the lord duke from Castel Durante with the dawn, and that day, being Sunday and the Madonna's Feast Day, sir Giovanni was carried to the Cathedral after Vespers with a great following of the citizens and of all the court. The publicity was dexterous. There were a thousand rumours in the taverns no doubt, and it could be no secret that the lord Francesco had taken horse at midnight on Saturday to Sinigaglia, but before the month was over he came back, and decorum seemed to have its justification. He and the lady Maria appeared more than once in public together.

Yet it was an unapt conclusion to what had been a pleasurable year, and irked as I think by a certain stringency of atmosphere, as well as by

the weather, which was consistently cold and damp and bad for his cough, the lord Giuliano went away to Rome with the lord Bembo in his company: the latter writing presently that he was well entertained, but that Rome was a costly adventure for one with a light purse. Christmas passed rather quietly, and then because of the lord duke's health it was decided to take him once more to Fossombrone, and there, after many months of suffering, and when the primroses were again starring all the slopes, he died: he, the rarest prince of our age, as Pietro Bembo has written of him.

All for whom the court meant existence realised that nothing was going to be quite the same again after the death of duke Guidobaldo. The duke and the duchess had been as the two sides of a medal, separate, and yet making one. It was their togetherness which had given meaning; that which gives its consequence to every marriage, however small and obscure a business it may seem to the outer world.

Our lady shut herself away from all except the lady Emilia; and mes<sup>se</sup>r Archangelo of Siena, the physician of his Holiness, who had been sent from Rome, but who had arrived too late to see the lord duke alive, declared that he feared for her life as well. I know not what would have happened without the quiet prevalence of the lord Baldassare Castiglione. He had courage to penetrate to the wardrobe, and came out with authority given him to dispatch councillors to all the cities of the duchy in case of disaffection, and this intrusion of his aroused our lady, so that when her brother the marquis of Mantua arrived on the following day she received him calmly. The marquis set off at once on the journey to Rome with the official notification of the decease, and he came back to Urbino at the end of the month with a papal brief of exhortation to all the people. The lord Giuliano and Pietro Bembo were with him, and there arrived as well ambassadors and deputies from every one of the states of Italy.

The funeral ceremonies were all over at last, although it seemed as if they never would be. First of all was the endless progress from Fossombrone to Urbino which we women were spared. The lord Castiglione described it to me afterwards as a night of mysterious dread with the torches going slowly forward under a starless sky and the multitude of them swollen by the country people who joined the procession all along the road. From the hillsides, he said, came wailing and the distant howling of watchdogs alarmed by it all. Then was the never-to-be-

forgotten sight of the great hall with the catafalque of black and gold and the blazing lights all round it, and beneath it the surge of the folds of the great blue mantle of the order of the Garter of England all lined with white damask and with a hood of crimson. During the two days of the lying-in-state ten thousand people, so it was declared, had passed the bier. On the afternoon of the 3rd day our lady received a deputation of the citizens and had their duty and their condolences, and then came the funeral service in the great hall where an oration of an almost unendurable length was delivered by messer Ludovico Ordasia the lord duke's tutor of old. Conducted by a great host, the body was afterwards taken for the night to the church of Santa Chiara, and the next day, with the rain pouring down, our lord made his last journey, to the monastery of the Zoccolanti Friars on the hillside facing the city, where he was laid to rest in the nave of the little church of S. Bernardino which his father had built on the site of the shrine where all the Montefeltri had been buried from time immemorial.

The days following were those of exodus and I knew the guilt of restlessness until I had assurance that the lord Giuliano was not leaving Urbino immediately with everybody else. Uncertainty and despondency were in the air. Our lady had shut herself up again in her rooms and would see no one but the lord Francesco, the new duke, who went in to her every day. She was regent of the duchy, and she had been left the fief of Castel Durante and a large sum to augment her dowry. The lord Francesco was dutiful to her as a son, and notwithstanding the occasional outbursts of his temper his character had integrity and he was not without parts. But life has no glory stays long in one dwelling, and the feeling was general that the status of the court would now be less illustrious, and everyone had his own future to consider. The lord Bembo was not alone in dubiety about it all. What made a little for determination was the knowledge of letters sent by his Holiness to the lord Baldassare and the lord Cesare Gonzaga asking them both to remain with his nephew and to use their influence for his good, and it seemed that an appeal of the same sort had been made to the lord Giuliano before he left Rome. Pietro Bembo said to my husband that to desert Urbino now would advance no one's cause, either with the Pope or with the Medici. I feel I do the lord Pietro a little injustice with my pen which I do not really feel in my heart. He was no longer a young man, and, with all his learning and his intelligence and wit, life had so far bestowed on him none of her gifts of place nor reputation, wealth nor power, and although he was profoundly sceptical he was yet honour-

ably ambitious. The considerations which swayed him at this time were more or less in the minds of all at the court, and perhaps, in the weeks of summer weather which followed the funeral, we were all more drawn towards one another as human beings than we had ever been before. There could be no attempt at making a court circle, but the lord Giuliano would ask one or another to supper in his own rooms and the turn of my husband and myself came to receive an invitation.

It was my husband's suggestion that I should copy, and take with me to this supper party, the prescription to cure a cough which I had brought with me from my home. The lord Giuliano was at times much troubled with cough, and this potion made of milk of almonds, sugar, starch, barley sugar, tea of roses and camomile was of proved efficacy. His lordship took the little script from me with his transient smile when he received us in his chamber all scattered with books and playing cards, and, still holding the hand he had kissed, he led me to a cabinet and took from it a great turquoise and a medallion of yellow onyx. He said that the lady Margherita Gonzaga was coming presently, and that he had brought gifts for us both from Rome, but that he proposed we should throw dice for the choice. The onyx had an exquisite group of the Graces, but the turquoise was minutely carved with a Victory, and when the lady Margherita arrived and threw a 4 to my 5, and I claimed the turquoise, I realised her suppressed annoyance. A dish of cherries and figs and a flagon of wine were on a table by the window, and she challenged me presently to bob-cherry knowing that I was awkward at it. The lord Giuliano told us, as the goblets were filled and handed, that the wine was gattinara from Piedmont which he had obtained in Bologna at the time of the Pope's visit, but he said that he had what was still better in store for us at supper itself; and this proved, presently, when we were at table in the next room, to be a suave red wine from vineyards on the river Rhône which had been brought from France by his brother the Cardinal. It loosened tongues and raised all our spirits as we sat round the board in our mourning attire: I remember all the detail of that evening and that we supped on artichokes fried in oil, on bream served with pickles and a sweet jelly, on young pullets with fritters, and a pasty of kid flavoured with thyme, on marchpane, and melons and peaches. The windows were open to the street below and a party of singers with viols came presently and stood beneath them, attracted doubtless by our merriment. It was a warm evening, and when supper was over we went down the narrow stair of the service into the garden which lay to the east, and this being separated by the



whole width of the palace from the apartments of the duchess, we set to playing blind-man's buff round the tank with the gold fish and among the beds with their box borders. We tired of romping anon, and the lord Cesare having challenged my husband to a game of palla in the hall built for the game by the late duke, these two left us, and the lord Gaspar with them. Thereupon the lord Giuliano sent a page for his lute and took his place between madonna Margherita and myself on a seat under the loggia. He told us that the duke Federigo when he built the palazzo had meant to enclose this garden entirely with two further wings, and with another set of double towers to match the south towers and to face monte Catria: we agreed with one another that it was unlikely that the plan would now ever know completion, and for our own felicity in this hour it seemed a providence that it never had, for beyond the garden lay the panorama of the mountains gilded with the setting sun. The garden itself was ablaze with roses and with clove pinks which scented all the air, and in the tempered light it all had an unreality as if it were under water.

The lord Giuliano touched his lute, showing us how it was tuned in fourths with a third in the centre. And then he sang with lilting lightness:

*Quanto è bella giovinezza!  
Ma sen fugge tuttevia  
Chi vuol esser lieto sia  
Di doman non v'è certezza.*

He reminded us that this was the composition of his grandfather, and said he felt sure Il Magnifico had sung it to beautiful ladies in this very garden.

The lady Margherita was as silent as myself. She was of wondrous fairness, her shoulders and breasts were like marble above the line of her black engrained silk, and a circlet of uncut garnets held together the curves of her thick blond hair. She was on the right hand of the singer, so that he had his shoulder towards me as he played. That he should make her his wife had been, as I knew, not left unconsidered. True that it had been dismissed from the contemplation of all as improbable, but as I sat there with my eyes on the paving at my feet I asked myself if it were impossible that it should happen. Her birth had been irregular, but she was of the Gonzaga<sup>18</sup> who, since they had wiped out the Bonacolsi nearly two hundred years ago, had reigned as sovereign-lords in Mantua. Nothing but ambition smouldering beneath the scarlet

biretta of an elder brother in Rome, nothing but hope of an eleventh hour that might never strike, seemed to stand in the way:

*Tollite, ô pueri, faces,  
Flammeum video venire.  
Ite, concinite, in modum,  
Io, Hymen Hymenœe, io,  
Io, Hymen Hymenœe!*

My lord's enchanted voice died out on the air. He told that the famous ode had been set to music for him by messer Marchetto Cara in the service of the court at Mantua, and thereat he and the lady Margherita spoke together of that court and had much to say of this and that.

Day lingered long: twilight shimmered through the air as a silver haze and partially veiled the vineyards on the undulating hills between the garden and the mountains. In the black shade of the cypresses to the right fire-flies flitted, and there was the occasional cry of an owl. It was the hour which is intolerable in its fascination and when restless souls go mad. I rose presently and wandered to the paths beyond the pool, picking for myself a sweet-scented posy; and then the stars began to twinkle faintly in the pallor over monte Catria.

The lady Margherita was standing waiting for me when I returned to the loggia, but the lord Giuliano was still sitting with the lute on his knee and was now improvising softly. We curtsied to him, the one and the other, with all the grace of all our training: and then, as the lady Margherita had precedence of me in the court, it was for her to go in front of me under the doorway and up the narrow stair. I had scarcely set my foot upon the bottom step to follow her when arms were around me and held me.

A kiss is immortal: and I knew it for an immortal sin as I gave my lips and all my soul with them: and I cared nought.

Five months later I found myself widowed. Our lady had ordained that the young lord duke Francesco should visit the court of Mantua and make the acquaintance of the lady Leonora Gonzaga, his wife, who was now 14 years of age. So in August, with no great willingness, he set out with a suitable escort and 4 gentlemen-in-waiting—my husband being one of them. The lord Giuliano de' Medici accompanied him at the invitation of the lady Isabella d'Este, and it was he who looked up and

discovered me at the window of the wardrobe of the duchess when the considerable cortège was assembling in the outer court. He drew my husband's attention to me when they were all mounted and moving away, and my last memory of my husband is that of a laughing salutation.

We had expected them all back in September, but the Pope, as ever, intervened, and required his nephew, whom he had made his captain-general, to hold a review of the papal troops at Bologna. This could not take place until November, and the lord Castiglione, who had gone to Bologna to join the party, wrote to our lady that he should rejoice when the time for departure thence came, for, apart from all the temptations of the city, the lord duke was at odds with Cardinal Alidosia the Legate there. My husband himself wrote to me by each courier, and his letters were, what he himself ever was, both witty and affectionate. I was sick with horror when our lady summoned me one morning to her cabinet and told me that he had been found in the dawn, lying stabbed, under one of the arcades which surround the piazza in front of the church of Santa Stefano in Bologna. The duchess was very kind. That my grief was genuine surprised her I think a little. I never learned the real truth about the murder. I envisaged the daughter of some citizen, and the vengeance of a brother or a father. But I have never sought for precise knowledge.

I wondered, after some interval, if our lady would desire to keep me in the court now that my presence had no particular validity; for I had always realised that she had little affection for me. The weeks went by however and no word was said. Looking back on it all I feel certain of her cognisance of the lord Giuliano's desire.

Although I was careful to give no expression to it, I knew a great sense of desolation without the protection which the existence of my husband had given to me. I had a native insouciance that, I think, had always made for me more enemies than my beauty, and after the first gust of compassion for me had passed, it was sought to make me realise myself as of no consequence in a thousand petty ways which I failed to counter with spirit because lack of experience of human nature gave the element of surprise to each happening. Moreover I was troubled about money, for my husband's salary had long been unpaid, and we were in debt to one and another of the tradesmen in the town and they were beginning to press me. I had not the mettle to tell the duchess of my

plight, and I knew not where to turn for aid except to my own parents: and to do that I was unwilling, for I guessed that they might suggest my return to them, and I did not wish to leave the court. Nor was this wish to be disparaged.

There are hours when loneliness clutches at the heart and when the simplest human kindness acquires, perhaps, a disproportionate importance. I had been suffering from an ague, and, but partially restored, I was coming down the grand stair from my room in the upper storey: I was still a little weak and giddy and was clinging to the stone baluster as I descended, and I make no doubt that I looked very white and forlorn as I made the last turn and came in sight of the lord Giuliano and the lord Baldassare who were standing by the open door of the throne-room. They came to the foot of the stair and greeted me with a compassion that had all brotherliness in it: and then I found that I was being led through the throne-room to the lord Giuliano's cabinet beyond. Here I was made to sit on a divan by the hearth, the lord Baldassare himself knelt to re-animate the fire, while the lord Giuliano brought me wine and sweetmeats. The warmth and the wine began to stir my blood a little, so that at last I found that I could weep, and in weeping I found relief and a strange comfort, and presently I was able to smile through my tears. It was the lord Baldassare who sat beside me and held my hand quietly in his, and it was he who said by and by that, if I would remain here and engage in a game of chess with the lord Giuliano, it would be a kind deed, for the physician had forbidden the Medici to venture out in the winter winds. Then an ivory and tortoise-shell chessboard with onyx chessmen was brought forth, and I and the lord Giuliano sat down to the first of the many games we were to play together. I knew all my self-respect restored to me and a great glow of gratitude. The lord Baldassare went away, but returned after an interval bringing madama Ippolita and one or two of the others to watch the end of the contest, and it was before them all that the lord Giuliano challenged me to another battle on a future day. Thus, unaffectedly, was I enrolled in the company of those who made recreation for Urbino's guest.

I know not if the growing frequency of my visits to his rooms was ever realised by the court, or was within the actual knowledge of our lady. Much was stirring in the world beyond the duchy, the duke

Francesco and all his captains were called away to war by his imperious uncle, and the duchess herself was harassed by it all and in indifferent health. His late campaign had made his Holiness the most important ruler in Italy, and he was now ambitious to round off his dominion and compel the republic of Venice to give up the cities she held in Romagna. Venice was ever formidable and audacious, and there was scarce a nation in Europe which had not a score to settle with her. It was therefore easy to unite the great powers against her, and his Holiness had contrived an alliance signed at Cambrai by the emperor and by France and Spain, and later by Ferrara, Mantua, Florence and Urbino. The French at once over-ran Lombardy and the emperor descended on Padua, and I overheard the lord Pietro say that Pope Julius had committed a great error in inviting these foreign armies into Italy and that no one could foresee the outcome. But the Pope had succeeded in gaining his own ends. With our lord duke Francesco Maria in charge of the papal troops, and the Cardinal Alidosia in charge of the supplies, the campaign to enlarge and consolidate the papal state was begun. We soon learned that Peschiera, Cremona, Bergamo had fallen to the duke, and later came the news that Ravenna, Cervia, Rimini and Faenza had surrendered. The lord Francesco came back to Urbino with his reputation as a commander of troops well established, but with many a tale to our lady and to others of the bad faith the Cardinal Legate had kept with him; this one hampering him, he said, out of envy and animosity at every turn. The lord Giuliano had made me follow the fortunes of the war with him, he acknowledging that for a Medici a general turmoil always bred the hope that a chance for recovery of Florence might arise.

Our fellowship was enhanced daily, and life seemed winged and wonderful. Sometimes I was impatient to understand what it all meant for myself, but to look into myself was to hunt through a great deep: nor would I employ the mere device of intelligence. I would acknowledge no gap at the heart of things, and turned to the starry certainty that love was a brave master knowing its own path. Another's happiness had become more important to me than mine own, and his mere existence in the world, apart from any relation to him, had become the complete answer to every enigma. No one has ever yet been equal to the tremendous demands of human intimacy, but I toughened all the fibres of my heart that I might apprehend what was ultimate in him, and came, I suppose, to the knowledge that a longing consumed him that lay beyond the longing for love: and I would give sometimes my

two hands into his keeping as he strove to convey to me his poignant memories of his happy boyhood in Florence and all his jumbled and aimless existence since. Then there was a winter afternoon when we were riding back side by side from hawking, and, as we turned a bend of the low hills, the little city of Urbino with its walls and towers of weathered gold came into sight above us, and lights began to appear one by one in its windows. The lord Giuliano said to me that, for fifteen years, since the day when he and his elder brothers had ridden into sight of it as fugitives, this had been ever his sanctuary and the one place where he knew a welcome would never fail him from those two beings he revered most on earth. But a sanctuary, he added, was not the same thing as a home: perhaps he was to be forever denied experience of the meaning of the word homecoming.

A woman always contrives canonisation for the egotism of the man she loves, and perhaps I knew a lesser content when our intercourse, as it sometimes did, succeeded in being impersonal. My lord had inherited a love of the humanities, and he said that the duke Guidobaldo had always encouraged his studies. He introduced me to all the amenities of the two libraries on the ground floor: one of them contained the manuscripts, and had a lectern of an eagle of gilded bronze, and we would stand there while the librarian, taking away the great Hebrew Bible, would place before us parchments that had been collected out of the east by the duke Federigo. I did not of course enter very profoundly into all the discourse of my lord and messer Agibito, but I was able in some degree to share such zest as they had for the news that in the monastery at Corvey discovery had lately been made of annals in 6 volumes by the Roman Tacitus. I could decipher the Latin tongue with a certain facility, but I had little scholarship in Greek, and the lord Giuliano would take me into the inner cabinet where a table of mosaic in tarsia stood, with chairs around it. There he would read me one thing or another in the Greek, saying that he would have me realise that although Latin was noble and laconic, yet Greek was supreme in melody and simplicity. Speaking to me one day with laughing diffidence of his own verses, and of the mirage ever before the eyes of those who take a pen in their hand, he found for me the passage in which Pindar declares that the thing that one says well goes forth with a voice unto everlasting.<sup>19</sup> And he reminded me that the Roman Horace had commemorated the deep-toned voice of Pindar.<sup>20</sup>

But my lord was more accomplished as a musician than as a poet, and his singing voice, which he had taken pains to train, would find its

incredible echo in my very soul. On the viol he was acknowledged as an expert, and when the summer days came, and we gathered after supper in the trim and considered garden of the duchess, he would often lead a concert of five or six instruments. Our lady came down sometimes to the garden on these occasions and sat there with her pre-occupied air. The bygone year had added to the age of her appearance, and I noted to myself that the lady Emilia too, although vivacious as ever, was no longer a young woman. They were both, without actual discourtesy, all but oblivious of myself, and this exclusion played its part in my destiny. I was able to endure their disparagement because I knew that before I reached my own room at bedtime I would be surely waylaid and entreated to give a little friendly companionship to one who found, as he would say, the night too long. The first time that this had happened I was one of a gay company, and we played at dice for comfits, and at the game of forfeits and other merriments. But afterwards I was one of just two or three invited guests, then found myself with my lord and the lord Baldassare only: and at length there was an evening when I discovered that I was to be alone with my lord. I was perturbed because of waggish tongues, but he said that he wished to make me acquainted with some of his father's sonnets, and he doubted if others would not find that tedious. It was an hour of quiet happiness: bliss to be enclosed with him by the narrow walls and their crimson hangings, to watch him as he read, to listen to the haunted intonation of his voice. I asked the stars that evening before I got into my bed if this was a joy I must never have again, and made myself the answer that of a surety it was not. And so there was again—and yet again. The practice of it all became easy by means of the service stair and a little ordinary caution. I realised the need to protect myself against inference, and fortune favoured me in that.

It was on a July night, with the casements open and the friendly moon looking in, that my lord and I found one another in unaffected avowal at last. It was on a night of great heat, a week later, that I discovered a dish of peaches on the table in his cabinet. My lord made laughing protest at the third I ate, but I snatched at a fourth, for there had been some dancing after supper and I was feeling both exhausted and reckless. He said that he must save me from the colic even against my will, and he took my wrists into his keeping. I was inept enough to struggle to free myself, and I suppose that I alone was to be censured when I lay presently in my lord's arms behind the bolted doors of the inner chamber.

When September was drawing to a close I could no longer blind myself to the certainty that I was with child. I knew not what to do, for absolution either from my lord, or from the court, or from a world that included mine own parents, was only to be had if I made obliviousness a possibility for them. The stars however were not unkindly, for events plunged the world of the court into absorption in affairs. The Venetians had gathered their forces together and had re-taken Padua, and with it had secured the person of our lady's brother the marquis of Mantua. Whereon the lady Isabella d'Este was insistent with our lady that she should invoke what influence she had with his Holiness to induce negotiations for her husband's release, and, as a part of this policy, it was determined, both at Mantua and at Urbino, to make the marriage of the lord duke Francesco an accomplished fact. He was sulky about it all, but in November the duchess set out for Mantua to fetch the bride, and the preparations occupied the minds of all. I was not chosen to be of the party, and the lord Bembo, who was, congratulated me with diverting ferociousness on his return. He said they had left Mantua in a thick fog, that it had rained almost without cessation the whole way, that they had been marooned in a bog, and that our lady had been so ill that the bride's litter had to be devoted to her. He said that what alone kept up their spirits was the merry temper of the lady Leonora herself. This was a comely and sweet girl, and the lord Francesco awoke to his good fortune when all the ceremonial was over. To me it was all a phasma, but I took trouble over my dresses and their appurtenances and played my part courageously in all the festivities of the wedding, and at the Epiphany too. Then in the New Year I learned that Pope Julius wished to make the acquaintance of his new niece, and that he had invited our lady to bring the newly-married pair to Rome for the Carnival. I knew that I must contrive to be left behind, and that proved to be easy of accomplishment when I was forthcoming with a tale of my mother's ill-health. The lord Pietro was sent ahead to see to the fitting preparation of the palazzo on the Corso which his Holiness had given his nephew as a wedding gift,<sup>21</sup> and early in February they all set out. My lord gave me money when we parted, for I had been obliged to represent to him that I must bribe certain persons with generosity.

In my own chamber in the palazzo, where I was presumably ill with recurring ague, my son was born on the Saturday before Easter, and on Easter Morn the Confraternity of Santa Maria di Piano found him on their doorstep in a basket and baptised him Pasqualino. A few months later I learned that a childless couple who had a little wineshop close to



the gate of Santa Bartole, had adopted him, choosing him from among other foundlings because of his beauty. I relate it all thus inadequately, shrouding mine own utter desolation.

The lord Giuliano de' Medici did not return to Urbino when the lord duke and the two duchesses came back there in the month of May, and Pietro Bembo too had remained behind in Rome to play at fortune there, although, as he wrote to me later on, the game was a complete gamble.

Whatever he guessed, he guessed enough to be sure that any news he could give me of the Medici would earn my gratitude, and although kindness of heart was not wanting in him, it was not kindness alone which moved him to an intermittent correspondence with me. I realise that he felt the future of the court of Urbino to be in the balance, and that I was a channel of intelligence. For I had become very intelligent. I had not passed through the fire of an experience of reality and remained supine in mind: I had every ulterior reason for keeping such friends as I had, because I did not mean that my son should grow up in a tavern. But, apart from mutual self-interest, the lord Pietro and I had the bond of the wretchedness of a life without dignity, in which we could never be at ease but must always be pleasing those above us. *Whether it be best to be great and serve others, or to be humble and free I know not*, he once wrote to me. *But I am quite sure that to be humble and serve is worst of all*. Dignity, he expounded, can only come from cultivating one's own garden: and when I demanded of him where that garden lay, he returned that he would be frank, and say that for me it lay only in another marriage and one divorced from the hierarchy of a court: for himself it lay in an independence which only riches would ever give him: so, how to grow rich?

Indeed the next few years were full of questioning. But before the death of his Holiness Pope Julius, in the year of our Lord 1513, Pietro Bembo had finally decided that for him policy lay in coalescence with the Medici. It is true that no one seriously thought of the Cardinal Giovanni as the next Pontiff, for it seemed certain that our own Archbishop, the Venetian Cardinal Grimani, would be elected; but events had at length given back Florence to the Medici family, and they had once again the importance of sovereign princes. It was on the first day of September in the year 1512 that the lord Giuliano, and a small company which included the lord Bembo himself, had quietly entered

Florence. For out of strange medley of emergencies this restoration, after eighteen years of exile, had become a fact.

If I am to disentangle all that persuaded Pope Julius to install the old ruling family once more in the state of Florence, and so secure all Tuscany against French influence, I must begin with the remembrance that Pietro Bembo had said truly that the league against Venice had needed much more reflection than his Holiness had given to it: for the Pope had forgotten that Venice was the strongest bulwark that existed against the Turk, that dreaded menace to all the Christian world. When the import of what he was doing was brought home to him, he at once proposed peace with Venice to his allies, but, finding them laggards in the matter, he did not hesitate to abjure the League and with hired Spanish and Swiss troops, and with the aid of the Venetians themselves, he engaged the armies both of the emperor and the French king on Veronese territory.

There were two years of warfare (1510-11) in which the Pope was continuously with his armies in the field and the outcome of them nothing but misfortune for him; for not only did he return to Rome defeated and lie there sick unto death, but his nephew, our lord duke Francesco, had entangled himself in serious trouble and for the second time had committed a murder with his own hand, he having stabbed the Cardinal Alidosia to death outside the quarters of his Holiness in Ravenna. It was held by the duke's friends that he had full justification for the deed, because that this Cardinal, ever the evil genius of Pope Julius, had not only betrayed Bologna to the French, but had afterwards sought to cover his treachery by accusing the lord Francesco to his uncle of cowardice. When the duke returned to us immediately afterwards it can be supposed that the concern of the duchess Elisabetta was very great, and the duchess Leonora shed bitter tears when a citation came presently to her husband from Rome where the Pope was now arrived ill and full of wrath. The lord Francesco set out in the month of July (1511), the lord Baldassare Castiglione going with him. This one wrote presently that the affair had been placed in the hands of the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici and 5 other Cardinals to investigate, and when many anxious months had gone by we learnt that the Cardinal Alidosia's treasons and his whole life had been dragged into the light by messer Filippo Beroaldo to whom the pleading had been entrusted,<sup>22</sup> that his Holiness had been reconciled to his nephew, and had consented to take the nourishment he had beforetime refused and was now restored

to health. When the duke returned to us before Christmas a Bull had been issued which fully absolved him.

But, while all this was forward, events had not stood still, for the French king Louis had been so enraged with his Holiness for his conduct respecting the league made at Cambrai, that he had summoned at Tours a Synod of French Bishops and Priests which impeached the Pope for corruption of Holy Church, and for making war for secular objects. This was no such shattering event, but some of the Cardinals next came together in Genoa and proceeded to summon a Council of the Church at Pisa in Florentine territory: prompted to the locality by the remembrance of the great Council of Florence a hundred years gone. The officers of the Republic heartily disliked and feared the project, and lost no time in sending messer Niccolò Machiavelli their captain-general to France to make their urgent representations. He was however unsuccessful with king Louis, and from that hour it must have been clear to Florence that she would have to pay for her exceeding-reluctant apostasy, because it was a chimera to suppose that the Papacy was assailable: and the lord Pietro Bembo once made this clear to me, saying that its impregnability was doubly assured in the case of the della Rovere Pontiff, for his ancestry was of the people, and infallible instinct to take the course which the unquestioning judgment of the people would uphold always came to his aid in hours of jeopardy. In the people, said the lord Pietro, the conception of miraculous authority vested in the person of the Bishop of Rome was so deeply rooted that æons might pass before it would die out of the political consciousness: and this, because it had its origin in a mythology of government that treasured immobility and infallibility as its core, and which had nothing to do with theology nor with logic: the emperors had succeeded to the gods, and the Popes had succeeded to the emperors, but the voice of the Pope was still the thunder of Zeus echoing from Olympus: we lived in days of enlightenment and learning, he observed, but only a hundred years ago, the Dominican, Ptolemaeus of Lucca, the librarian at S. Pietro, had written a history which made the Lord Christ the first of the Popes, and this, not for the glorification of the Papacy, but to do honour to our Lord by ascribing to Him the highest dignity possible.

This, as envisaged by Pietro Bembo, was perhaps a just conception (and must needs ever be reckoned on by men in the battle of Yea and Nay) and the Pope Julius, acting, as he ever did, by instinct and on impulse, was no doubt always able, because of this, to act successfully in the interests of prerogative and authority. He did not now hesitate to lay

both Pisa and the schismatic council under a Ban, with the immediate result that, not only did the citizens of Pisa tremble for the safety of their souls and bar their Cathedral doors against the Cardinals, but the emperor Maximilian himself hesitated to send his representative to the Council which quickly transferred itself to the French territory of Milan. In the church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, in the month of October, in the year of our Lord 1511, a Holy League was proclaimed, and soon the troops of Venice, of Switzerland and of Spain were converging into Lombardy with the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici as Legate of the papal hosts. But the French had a very great leader in the viceroy of Milan, the prince Gaston de Foix, duke of Nemours, and the armies of the League were forced back into Romagna with the loss of town after town; and finally, at Ravenna, on Easter Day, and on a field of carnage, they were completely routed and the Cardinal de' Medici was taken prisoner. It is true that the French leader fell on the field, but the victory was none the less crushing, for all Romagna was lost and the road to Rome lay open to the victors.

It was said in Urbino that, when the dire news was brought to Pope Julius by the lord Ottaviano Fregosa, his Holiness was disposed, for one hour and for the first time in his life, to share the general consternation: but his will had quickly re-asserted itself, and next day he had assurance from various sources that the French army was in no condition for a fresh advance. It has been duly set forth in chronicles how he re-constituted the Holy League bringing England into it, and how he summoned a Lateran Council and made the safety of Holy Church the rallying cry of Christendom. In a few months after the battle of Ravenna, Rome was illuminated to celebrate the re-establishment of papal monarchy over extended states. And it was in these circumstances that it became the lot of Florence to expiate her conduct.

The Cardinal de' Medici was himself with the Spanish army when it marched against his native state. After his capture at Ravenna, he had been taken to Milan, but when that city rose against the French, the schismatic Cardinals, who were still there, carried him with them in the wake of the army, and when crossing the Po at Bassigna escape had been contrived for him. He was therefore able to be in the little Florentine town of Prato, ten miles from Florence itself, when it was given over to the bestiality of the Spanish levies. It is said that he was weeping unrestrainedly when, on his white Arab horse, and side by side with the

viceroy da Cardona, he rode across the spreading piazza of Prato with its wrecked booths, stained gravel, and stench of dead bodies, came out under the city gate over the drawbridge, and faced the lavender outlines of the mountains and the smiling Florentine plain with its vineyards. He was ever full of sensibility.

Many years afterwards, when for a space I went to and fro in the thoroughfares of Florence, I had hap to consult more than once messer Benedetto Landucci, a chemist and apothecary who dwelt at the corner of the via di Spade close to the Strozzi palazzo. Our talk would sometimes range over affairs, and he being of a family long native to the city, I was prone to ply him with questioning about the past. He told me one day that he had in his possession a chronicle, kept for many years by his father whom he had succeeded in the business: and it needed only a little persuasion before he let me have this in my keeping for a while. I copied from it all that was of near interest to myself, and it seems to me now that in the words of a Florentine citizen himself is the restoration of the Medici best set forth.

*From the Diary of Messer Luca Landucci 1512.<sup>23</sup>*

21st August We heard that the troops of the Church and of Spain were coming against Florence; and as the fear grew, people began to flee from the districts of Barberino and the Val di Marina coming to the gates of Florence; all Sunday there was such a throng of carts and mules and cattle that a vote of 50 thousand florins was passed in the Palagio for our defence. But so far our territory had not been touched.

23rd August During these few days the whole of the plain of Prato was deserted, so that the gates of San Gallo, Faenza, the Prato and San Friano were blocked to such a degree that there was a row of carts more than a mile long waiting to be able to enter, and it was necessary to let almost everything pass through without paying duty. The poor women and children were laden with their scanty possessions; anyone who saw them could not help feeling moved and forced to weep. It was voted that flour should not be taxed.

25th August It was decreed that Our Lady of Santa Maria Impruneta should be brought here.

During these days men-at-arms and foot soldiers were levied in great numbers and we prepared for everything.

26th August. Ambassadors came here from the Viceroy who requested three things of the Signoria: first that we should enter the League; secondly that we should let the Medici return to Florence; and thirdly that the Gonfalonier should resign his office and return to his house.

27th August. Our troops now numbered 17 thousand men, counting the militia and the men-at-arms together.

That day the enemy came down and took Campi without resistance, and having taken everything they wanted went off in the direction of Prato.

*29th August.* At about 18 in the afternoon (2 p.m.) the Spaniards took Prato by bombardment and assault. That they should have taken such a strongly fortified place in one day was marvellous, because there were 4 thousand soldiers in it, and so many peasants of the district who had taken refuge there with their property and their wives and children, having come from all the country round, that there was a great collection of wealth; and yet they all became as timid as mice and could not hold out for a single day. There were two reasons that those outside were so fierce; one was that they had been nearly starving for 2 days; and the second that they knew there was a store of wealth in the place; and a still more powerful reason for their success was that we did not send from here the help that we might have done. I do not know whose negligence it was, but I saw the soldiers standing about at the gates, and no one attempted to send them away, although we heard the report of the cannon all the time which made many marvel at this delay. Therefore these cruel miscreants and infidels entered the place and slew everyone whom they encountered; not content with having such a large booty they spared hardly anyone's life, and the few that remained they took and placed a ransom upon them, on rich and poor alike, and anyone who was unable to pay they tortured in the most disgraceful and abominable ways. They sacked the monasteries and they slaughtered women and children with every sort of cruelty and infamy. It was said that 5 thousand persons were killed. It seemed as if it were by divine permission that our chief citizens were so dilatory; having 18 thousand soldiers, a number which exceeded theirs, we had already hindered them from obtaining provisions, so that they could not have held out more than 2 or 3 days without dying of hunger, and they would all have been slain or else taken prisoners in endeavouring to flee. It had not been at all prudent of them sending such a quantity of men and munitions to Prato; it was almost impossible haste to have taken Campi on the 27th and Prato on the 29th. It happened, however, on account of our sins. And now the traitors are so well furnished with provisions that they can stay there as long as they wish, and have all become rich with so much booty.

*30th August.* The Pistoiese took the keys of the city to the Spanish camp and made an agreement with them; and Pescia did likewise; so that the Signoria sent two of our citizens to the Viceroy to make an agreement, and after going backwards and forwards for some time the following terms were stated: first, we were to join the League and pay 60 thousand florins; secondly, the Gonfalonier who had been appointed for life was to go back to his house; thirdly, we were to re-instate the Medici.

*31st August.* The ambassadors returned, having consented to everything; and on arriving here they went to the Palagio at about 18 in the afternoon (2 p.m.) and dismissed the said Gonfalonier, Piero Soderini, pacifically, and with his own consent, as he said that he did not wish to be a hindrance to the

people, and was contented with whatever was the will of God; and later he left the city. And many other citizens left likewise, some going to Siena, some here and some there, for greater security.

*1st September.* Giuliano de' Medici entered Florence, and the new Signoria entered the Palagio without a Gonfalonier; all the citizens who considered themselves friends of the Medici assembled at the door of the Palagio and in the Piazza, all fully armed, and barred every way into the Piazza.

*4th September.* At this time nearly all our battalions left Florence; and a new Gonfalonier had not yet been elected; according to what was said, the citizens were not quite agreed as to the manner of government. But the most important thing was to collect the money that had been promised, as the Spaniards would not leave Prato without it, and the Cardinal did not come here. Amongst other cruelties committed by these miscreants, was their placing impossible ransoms upon those prisoners whom they had not killed, and continually torturing them. This was far worse than slaying them in hot blood. But I think that the viceroy, and all those who had the power to hinder this, will meet with their deserts; and it ought to have been put in the agreement that the sackings should cease, for they went on all the time they stayed there, and chiefly that such treatment of the prisoners should not go on.

*12th September.* The money was taken to the Spaniards.

*16th September.* (Thursday) At about 19 in the afternoon (3 p.m.) Giuliano de' Medici and all his men went into the Palagio fully armed and took possession of it, since there was no resistance. The piazza was full of armed men and all the streets and outlets from it were barred with men-at-arms crying perpetually 'palle'. God be praised! Everyone ought to be content with what Divine Providence permits, because all states and jurisdictions are of the Lord, and if in these changes of government the people suffer some hardship, loss, costs, or discomfort, we must consider that it is on account of our sins and with the object of some greater good.

*18th September.* On this day the viceroy came to Florence with perhaps 50 horsemen and went about to see the city and the churches, and he wished to go up in the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore to see it, and several citizens went with him, my son Benedetto among them. He left again the same day, returning to Prato, and gave orders for the army to set out.

*19th September.* The Spaniards left, and went to Calenzano, taking with them those prisoners who had not been able to ransom themselves; therefore the peasants who had taken refuge in Florence began to return home, although with some distrust. And the Cardinal left here and went to visit the viceroy on his departure.

*2nd October.* The Medici had their coats of arms repainted on their palace, at the Nunziata, and in many places; and they caused the image of the Gonfalonier to be removed from the Nunziata de' Servi.

*5th October.* A proclamation was made that whoever had property of the

house of Medici was to notify it on pain of the gallows; and many things were recovered.

*6th November.* The Cardinal de' Medici left here and went to Bologna.

*19th January.* The Cardinal de' Medici came to Florence from Bologna.

Before the Christmas festival, which the Medici were to celebrate in their own home for the first time since their boyhood, I had accomplished the composition of a letter to the lord Giuliano and had contrived for its despatch and its delivery into his hand. The lord Bembo had written from Florence to the lord Castiglione in the month of November that the Cardinal was much busied in tracing, where he could, the chattels and all the works of art belonging to the Medici palazzo which had been sold publicly in the Orto Sa' Michele after the sack in the year 1495. In this way, and from other sources too, the palazzo, which he described as of moderate size, was said by the lord Pietro to be assuming some air of comfort; and he added his jest that he understood that the provision of a nursery in a corner of the top floor had not been neglected, and that an occupant for it had already arrived from Urbino. And it was this information that Anna da Collo had disposed of her bastard so triumphantly, which roused me to a passion of resolution. This was not the first child of Anna's of which the Prior Giulio de' Medici was the father, but it was the first born after her marriage to Bizio da Collo, the duke's coachman. He had beaten her, we learnt, and that the child had vanished; and now it appeared that Anna was not witless, as indeed none of these Tartar slaves ever were. She had been bought for our lady with two others by the lord Ottaviano Fregosa's commission from a dealer in Genoa, and she had been idle and troublesome from the first. I had slapped her myself more than once for neglect of her work in the chambers, and there were so many tales about her that our lady had been glad when Bizio married her and she went to live in the city with him. But I had always known that she must have in her possession a key to the door between the stables and the stair in the tower which sir Giovanni Andrea had used to his undoing, because I had met her more than once looking furtive in corridors: and, when I heard of this child, I remembered that Giulio de' Medici had made Urbino a halting place on his flight to Rome after the battle of Ravenna. In after years when he was Pope, it was said that the father of this bastard Alessandro was the young lord Lorenzo de' Medici: but this I am con-



fident was not the truth, for the lord Lorenzo was never in Urbino in all this time.<sup>24</sup>

What I wrote to the lord Giuliano was for my child's sake, but I found the humiliation of needing to petition him at all was very grievous. Women are obliged to learn the art of importunity, because, only to escape the irksomeness of a persistence, will a man make concession to the woman for whom his passion is dead, or to whom he decides he need not hold a candle. But I was careful to importune with discretion, and I realised that what was vital as a preliminary was that the lord Giuliano should acquaint the Cardinal his brother with the fact of the existence of his son. My lord returned me an answer under cover to the lord Baldassare that was kindlier than I had hoped. He said that his anxiety would be always for my welfare, and that, as my wishes would always have weight with him, he had told his brother Giovanni of the fact that a child existed in Urbino of whom he was the father. The Cardinal, he said, had naturally laughed a good deal, but when they came to the discussion of what might be done in the matter, had pointed out that their position in Florence needed circumspection, and that it would be more prudent to let some little time elapse before making acknowledgment of frailty to the satirical Florentine public. This reply came to me in the New Year, and before February was over we learned in Urbino that Pope Julius was dead.

I will revert to the chronicle of messer Luca Landucci.

### 1513

*20th February.* It was said that the Pope was dead.

*22nd February.* The Cardinal de' Medici went to Rome in great haste; and here the bells were tolled at the nona for the Pope's death. He had died on Sunday the 20th.

*4th March.* The Cardinals entered into conclave to elect the Pope.

*11th March.* Two hours before dawn a rumour arose in Florence that the Cardinal de' Medici was Pope; and there was much bell-ringing, and bon-fires were lighted in many parts of the city, with such joy and commotion and such persistent cries of 'Palle' that it made everyone get up, even the women, and go to the windows; it began at 8 in the morning (4 a.m.), nevertheless no news had come, for on enquiring at the Palagio and the palazzo of the Medici we were told there was no news yet. It was quite impossible however to do anything the whole day but cry 'Palle' although nothing was known. It seemed as if the people had guessed what had happened in the most marvellous way; for it is a true proverb which says: 'Vox populi,

vox Dei', but to intelligent people it looked rather foolish to be ringing the bells and making bonfires before we knew the truth.

At 2 o'clock that Friday night (10 p.m.) the news came, and it was true that the Cardinal de' Medici had been elected Pope with the name of Leone X. If there had been bonfires and rejoicings before, they were redoubled now, and in a different spirit; innumerable bundles of brushwood, great branches, baskets, barrels, and whatever each poor man chanced to have in his house; all the smallest streets of the city did their part without stint, and the people not yet being content, ran all over Florence to pull down the wooden roofs and everywhere burning up everything. They put the whole city in great danger; and this nuisance lasted all Friday and Saturday, bonfires continuing, and illuminations upon the Palagio, up on the cupola, on the gates and everywhere, with so much firing of cannon and continual cries of 'Palle', 'Papa Leone' that it seemed as if the city were upside down, and anyone who had seen it from overhead would have said: 'Florence is burning down the whole city', for there was such a tumult of shouting, and fires, and smoke, and reports of the cannon large and small; and on Sunday the same, and on Monday worse than ever. They placed upon the gallery behind the parapets of the Palagio, a gilt malmsey cask at each corner, full of firewood and other stuff to burn and also on the ringhiera and in the piazza many gilt casks were burnt, accompanied by the continual sound of the spingards (small guns). It was really incredible what a number of fires there were in the city; every single person had one at his door. And in addition to this they made several triumphal cars and every evening set light to one in front of the house of the Medici in their honour; one was of discord, war, and fear, whilst another was of peace, and this latter they did not burn, as if to express that there was an end of all passions, and peace remained triumphant.

*April.* Pope Leone was crowned at Rome, with much ceremony and great magnificence and display.

*17th April.* We heard that messer Giulio de' Medici was made Archbishop of Florence, and there were great rejoicings all through the city, so that the houses at the back of the Archbishop's palazzo, towards San Giovanni caught fire.

This same day Giuliano de' Medici, brother of the Pope went to Rome to visit him.

*10th August.* Lorenzo, son of Piero de' Medici returned to Florence.

*14th August.* The new Archbishop, messer Giulio, who was a Cardinal, came to Florence.

*18th September.* Francesco del Pugliese was banished for 10 years for having used some disrespectful words about the house of Medici.



ROME



# ROME

THE unexpected result of the conclave was reported by some to be due to the astuteness of Dovitzi da Bibbiena as a conclavist, but others said that the Cardinal de' Medici owed it to his reputation for a love of peace, because that all were weary of the tumultuous methods of the late Pope. His ill-health, moreover, served him, for although only thirty-seven years of age, he had an incurable fistula and his life could not be a long one. The historian, messer Francesco Vettori, has written too that it was hoped that one who held sway in Florence would be powerful enough to resist both Spain and France, the two great powers which contended for supremacy in Italy.

The lady Elisabetta had been ailing with rheumatism all the winter, and knowledge of this moved those who were in Rome to be industrious with their pens, so that many narratives of the glories of the coronation reached Urbino. None of the letter writers had the art of the creation of a picture by the expression of an idea, and their inventories of ceremonies and processions, of vestures, vestments and liveries, banners and baldacchinos, cavalcades and retinues, triumphal arches, street altars and effigies of ancient divinities, remained to me inventories only. My own want of knowledge of affairs was brought home to me at this time, for the letter of the lord Baldassare Castiglione (the longest of all those received) had not omitted to describe the admission of the Cardinal Giovanni to the priesthood, his consecration as Bishop, and the celebration of his first Mass. I had not before this fully realised that Cardinals were not always Mass-priests, and I spoke about it to messer Agibito the next time I had occasion to borrow from the library, for I generally found that what he said was apposite. He told me that the whole subject was one that interested him, for it was enveloped in much obscurity.

Dusk had gathered I remember, and I sorry that I had begun on the topic long before he had done with it. I think that what he would have me mainly understand was that religion can never be an end in itself but only a witness to what goes beyond it, and that the Church must belong to this world as the place where the last consequences of human possibility are realised: that the attempt must be made to complete the

purpose of God through the operation of the Church's power. And was not it clearly God's purpose that the world should be saved by Rome, asked the librarian as he peered at me over the top of his desk with his pale, near-sighted eyes. Rome had saved the world from all that the domination of the Moloch that was Carthage would have meant: she was the great sanity, and not by haphazard had the feet of the holy San Pietro been turned thither to found an empire over men's souls of which the empire of the Cæsars had been the forerunner: he had foreseen what would be, and all that had become a majesty owed its beginnings to his practical insight. He, with S. Paolo and the other holy Apostles, had realised the need to function, and for that the need of functionaries: in S. Stefano and in his fellow-deacons we had the embryo of the papal court.<sup>1</sup> Much of the confusion in minds such as mine, said Niccolò Agibito, lay in ignorance that the Cardinals were in reality but high officials attached to the court of his Holiness, and, that being ecclesiastical, it was incumbent on all its members to conform to ecclesiastical garb and to become clerics. There was, it is true, so he continued, a rule that there should be admission at the end of a year to Deacon's Orders, but it was possible to get this term indefinitely extended, and moreover, should the chance of making a profitable marriage arise, dispensation was not unheard of:<sup>2</sup> the Cardinal de' Medici himself had been a deacon since his fourteenth year, but, had he not kept the greater prize of the triple tiara steadfastly in his mind, a wife who should bring him a principality had not been an impossible alternative—so m<sup>rs</sup> Niccolò judged. I reminded him that our Cardinal Grimani in Urbino was an Archbishop, and he replied that nowadays Bishops and Priests received the red hat equally with laymen, and that it was all an anomaly about which it was not easy to be cogent, and something that, like much else in this mortal life, worked well in practice although it was illogical. He concluded with surmises as to who the Cardinals of the new Pope would be. I asked him presently why he supposed that the Medici had chosen, as we heard, to be known as Leo X: and he answered that Leo I had been the first of the greater Popes, but that he thought the real reason the fact that the lion was the emblem of Florence.

It was when I heard that the Mother Superior of Sta Maria di Piano was resolved to remove the confraternity to Rome, that my perplexity about my son transformed itself into a decision. The Reverend Mother was of the Rucellai family of Florence, she had known the Cardinal

Giovanni and the lord Giuliano in their childhood, and they were always punctilious in paying their respects to her when they were in Urbino. Our lady smiled when she heard of the projected migration, but all thought that it showed both spirit and wisdom.

My son was now three years old, and it wrung my heart to ride by the tavern of Sta. Bartole and catch sight of him, perchance on the table among the flagons, upheld by good-natured hands and surrounded by laughing faces as he made his precarious promenade. Once, as I approached from over the causeway<sup>3</sup> on my jennet with the lady Margherita beside me and our grooms behind, my son's foster-mother brought him out of the door in her arms to look at our little cavalcade; and gazing down I encountered, gazing up at me out of the pale oval of the child's face, dark eyes that seemed to say that they accepted life but had no enthusiasm for it. Today they look on the world out of the great picture which messer Tiziano Vecelli has painted of my son.

I had all the fear of my own inexperience and of my inability to realise the conditions among which the lord Giuliano now found himself in Rome as brother to the Pontiff, and I had hesitated to defeat my end again by ill-timed pressure. But the transit of the Sisters of S. Maria seemed an opportunity which I must seize, and for the second time I wrote to my lord, realising a vulgarity in the wording of my missive, but knowing now by instinct and experience that, if one would demand equity from the Medici, or indeed from any man, one must not be too transcendent. My invocation prevailed: and the court of Urbino learned shortly that the lord Castiglione had a commission and money provided to obtain a bastard of the Medici from its foster-parents in Urbino and send it to Rome with the Confraternity of S. Maria. How much, I speculated for the hundredth time, did the lord Pietro Bembo, now a secretary in San Pietro, guess, when he wrote to me three months later? He said that I would be diverted to see the Sisters from Urbino housed in a fine dwelling on the hill of the Aventine which they had obtained by a most commendable diplomacy. Moreover they had transported with them from the deserts of Umbria a young bantling of the house of Medici, and the Holy Father had been brought to a cognisance of his nephew in the parlour of the Reverend Mother: the child was of a surprising beauty and a most engaging liveliness, and the outcome had been that there were now rooms set apart for nurseries in S. Pietro, and the nurse had her orders to be with her charge in the ante-room of the private apartments every day after the hour of dinner, when his Holiness seldom neglected to send for the child. All the literature of



antiquity had been in review, Pietro Bembo told me before a fitting name for this son of the gods had been discovered; and I, with himself, would doubtless wonder if this later Ippolito, too, might ever have cause to declaim, *Great Zeus, why didst thou, to man's sorrow, put woman, evil counterfeit, to dwell where shines the sun?* I returned a merry answer to Rome in due course, saying to the lord Pietro how much his gossip had entertained us all, and especially that which concerned the child. I hoped, I wrote, that when his hour came, the modern Ippolito would urge the horses of passion to an end less disastrous; but I could not forget that Euripides, in the same play, had reminded us that *Suffering for mortals is nature's iron law*.

Messer Agibito had been shrewd at the game of guessing, but the new Cardinals numbered four only, and not seven as he had prophesied. They were Monsignor Bernardo Dovitzi da Bibbiena, who had been of the household of Giovanni de' Medici in boyhood and with him in all the years of exile: the lord Innocenzo Cibo the young son of the Pope's sister Maddelena: the datary to his late Holiness, Monsignor Lorenzo Pucci of the Florentine family, and in some sort a cousin: and that other cousin the Reverend Father Giulio de' Medici, Prior of Capua, from whom the stain of illegitimacy was removed by a papal proclamation of the secret marriage of his parents. (This scandalising many throughout all Italy.) The lord Castiglione, on his return to Urbino, said that the rooms of the Cardinal da Bibbiena in San Pietro were very splendid; and we who knew Bernardo Dovitzi's love of beauty could conceive it sympathetically, for his gaiety and high spirits had made us all his friends. He was installed as treasurer to the Pope, and the lord Bembo and the Fra Sadoleto had posts under him and were to be presently Monsignori and were not ill-content. The lord Bembo wrote that Rome was a hotbed of intrigues and rumours, for adherents of the Medici had flocked there from Florence, and all entertained hopes that were inordinate. The Orsini palace was a chief centre of gossip, and from there was let abroad the extravagant tale that the Pope's purpose was to seize Naples and bestow the crown on his brother the lord Giuliano, and the dukedom of Milan on his nephew, the lord Lorenzo, thereby embroiling his Holiness immediately in difficulties with king Ferdinand of Spain and king Louis of France: for it all reached their ears, neither of them believed any denials, and they made a truce with one another and arranged a marriage between their families which might

mean the eventual combination of Naples and Milan under one sovereign—this the dominant nightmare of every Pontiff.

But while all this sounded improbable enough, still there could be no doubt in men's minds that the glory of his own family must be naturally among the new Pope's pre-occupations, and somehow the idea came to be in the air, that, although he would be content that his nephew should occupy much the same position which his own father had held in Florence, yet, for his brother, he desired a ducal state and was meditating on Urbino.

This seemed to me a stark impossibility, and I remember, when it first came to my ears, I listened with indifference, regarding the hearsay as ill-nature only: and even now the mind seeks to ignore the story. There are ghostly discomforts for which we never forgive life, and the tale of the rape of Urbino by the Medici is one of them. Anathema of him who commits the most inglorious of all the sins must always be paralysed, it being clear that he is only a masquerade of something *in nubibus*.

It was intelligible that the principality of Urbino on the west, and that of Florence on the east, both in Medici hands, would make for a Medici Pope a great certitude of the Papal State which lay between them. This was the duke Francesco's ill-fortune: and I feel that I am an apt pupil of Pietro Bembo if I say that it should be regarded as an axiom of morality that good fortune is the only fit object for human veneration. The duke's undoing brought contingency to many, and myself among them; for it cast me into the whirlpool of Rome and decided me to make another marriage there. I would set it down briefly as it happened.

It was in the autumn after the Pope's coronation that the incredible rumour first travelled to Urbino, and inquietude prevailed all the winter. But it was not until the winter to follow that the lord duke learned that he had been deprived of the Gonfalons and that they had been given to the lord Giuliano. His chagrin was very great. All that winter Pope Leo seems to have been playing at the game of double or quits with the king of France, and it is not surprising perhaps if the duke Francesco began to wonder if the friendship of France would not be a wise provender for himself. The new king, Francis, was young, and he must needs revive the ever-reiterated claims of France to the crown of Naples, besides setting himself the nearer task of regaining Milan once more reverted to the Sforza, who, like himself, founded prerogative on marriage with the Visconti: the lord Francesco Sforza having for wife a

bastard of that family, and the most Catholic King having for mother-in-law the lady Valentine Visconti.

The French army came down into Lombardy in the summer of the year of our Lord 1515, and the lord Giuliano advanced north against it in command of the papal troops. He asked the duke Francesco to meet him in Gubbio and there gave assurance (as he himself undoubtedly believed) that there was no truth in any of the stories about Urbino: the duke thereon promising to raise levies for his Holiness if money was provided. Money seems to have been sent from Rome with the pointed advice from the lord Bembo to march against the French at once, and the lord Castiglione with an anxious mien was to and fro. Out of the vast confusion of events and counter-events I select this, that the Pope and his allies were defeated by the king of France at the battle of Marignano and that our lord duke was not there. It cannot be denied that he thereby did his Holiness a singular dis-service.

It was said that when his Holiness received the news of the battle in Rome he realised immediately that there could be no reversal of fortune for the Papacy as after Ravenna and that he must negotiate for peace. He chose Bologna as a meeting place with the king of France and made a personal triumph out of his sojourn there: it was only concerning Urbino that king Francis, who was young and chivalrous, was hard to be persuaded. Yet his Holiness was able to prevail, and I learnt that the Cardinal Giulio had written that the Pope's mind was made up: that he did not wish to hear the thing discussed, but that it would be done without more words.

This was not, however, the case. There were further words: and yet words again.

The lord Giuliano was lying very ill in Florence, and on his way back to Rome the Pope stopped there to be with him. And to the lord duke there came presently a letter which said, *I have heard my lord that it has been represented to you how the Pope has a mind to take your state from you and give it to me; but this is not true, for on account of the kindness, favour and benefits I have ever received from your Excellency and your house, I should never consent to it however much desired by his Holiness, lest other princes of your rank should resolve in consequence never again to give refuge at their courts as was granted to me and mine. Be assured therefore, that, whilst I live, you will not only receive no molestation on my account, but will ever be regarded by me as an elder brother.*<sup>4</sup> But the lord Castiglione wrote urgently from Rome that no one must be deceived, and that the Cardinal da Bibbiena advised as a last hope that the lady Elisabetta herself should

go to Rome; the Cardinal holding it to be a possibility that this might prevail with one so desirous of reputation for princeliness as Pope Leo. At this our lady exclaimed before us all that the Medici had gone from the tilling of the soil to be tradesmen in narrow streets, and that they still retained beneath their suavity the crassness of boors and hucksters. It was, she avowed, a sorry day that brought her the necessity of the barbarism of becoming a suitor to this spiritual bankrupt. Her vehemence took us by surprise, but none I think doubted that she would make the sacrifice: that it was for no son of her own body nor of her own spirit that she must entreat would make entreaty for her the greater obligation.

The duchess went to Rome in state, with all her ladies, and all the gentlemen of the now diminished court, and men-at-arms for escort. Our company entered Rome after its endless journey before noon on the last day of the month of February, 1517, and that afternoon and evening, in the great chamber of the Montefeltro palazzo on the Corso, our lady received the homage of all the Cardinals in Rome and that of the chief officers of the palazzo of San Pietro. It was auspicious to see so many Urbino friends in this new atmosphere, but all, I noted presently, were wearing an air of affability that it were perhaps a perversion to call patronage: I noted too that, face to face with our lady's wonted gravity, it shed itself speedily. We could have wished that the audience with his Holiness should have been delayed until we had all recovered somewhat from the great fatigue of the journey, but next day found us jolting in the black velvet Montefeltro coaches emblazoned with the great eagle through the narrow streets between the Corso and the river, jolting presently into a piazza where a confused jumble of walls confronted us, and where doors in their midst were opened to admit to a court full of halberdiers.<sup>5</sup> Chamberlains in black tunics received our lady at the foot of a wide and pallid staircase, and, as we all mounted it, between the lacqueys in crimson liveries, and making as I thought a brave show, I wondered what degree of honour was actually being paid to her. She was a queenly figure in an albernia of black satin lined with ermine, her veil held in position by a circlet. We passed through endless apartments of endless magnificence, lined with guards in differing uniforms and crowded with nobles and Monsignori, and yet onwards to a throne-room with red silk hangings and a velvet canopy over a gilded chair: out of this opened a smaller room which seemed to be peopled with

Cardinals only, and the Cardinal da Bibbiena came forward from among them. We learnt from him that the retinue was to go no farther, and, attended by the lord Castiglione and the lady Emilia only, the duchess was led through the throng of Cardinals to a door beyond which was closed behind them.

And this was the first of four occasions when, with equal state on our part, but, we realised, with diminishing ceremonial on the part of the papal court, we climbed the great staircase and trailed through the vast apartments. On that first morning his Holiness (incredible in bulk, so the lady Emilia said) had been as radiant with charm and good humour as he alone knew how, but he had declared himself a slave to pressing affairs and with no time for discussion, and our lady, not braced for the conditions among which she found herself, had been obliged to withdraw with less than nothing accomplished. Subsequently she forced her plea on her elusive adversary to find what was implacable behind his genial evasion, and it was only with despair and deep repugnance that she reminded him at last of Urbino's hospitality to the Medici throughout long years. I do not set down here the retort of his Holiness to this invocation: for a grotesque can never seem a reality. We, waiting in the throne room, were suddenly aware of silence fallen among the Cardinals in the room beyond us, and saw our lady coming between their parted ranks with head held high, with lower lip dropped, and with veil and robes caught together as if she were picking her way through a shambles.

It were better that this had been the end of it all: but, no sooner had the lord Baldassare persuaded the duchess to give orders to pack the gear, than came the news that the lord Giuliano had died in the monastery on the hillside outside Florence to which he had been carried with the hope that the purer air would benefit his complaint. We learned that the Pope's grief was uncontrollable, and our lady immediately exhorted herself that he must now, out of honour for the memory of the dead, refrain from doing that which was to dishonour his own memory for ever. She thereon resolved to stay in Rome until after Easter and await the return of the papal court from the villa at Magliana, the physicians having advised that his Holiness must have change and distraction. The lord Castiglione, overtaxed and worn with it all, was prevailed on by the lord Pietro Bembo to go with him to the resort of Tivoli in the Sabine Mountains. Before he left us he declaimed that he himself was convinced of the indignity of lingering in Rome, for that in his opinion hope did not exist: the first good day's sport at Magliana would, he averred, fully restore the cheerfulness of Pope Leo. Moreover, he held,

and we all realised it, that our lady herself had been her own undoing. As a constellation in Europe she had ever been an irritation to the self-importance of an inferior nature. Circumstances had forced the Cardinal de' Medici to hold a candle to her for twenty years, and he was now playing the game of humiliating her with lurking glee. Urbino owed its fate to the fact that the Pope must have it for practical reasons, but he was undeniably allowing himself the luxury of the exercise of a bland malice.

His Holiness was plainly desirous to shirk any further parley on the matter, for Easter was past and he had not returned to Rome. The weather was beginning to be very hot, and the duchess, taking with her the lady Emilia Pio and two tiring-maids, went to visit her sister-in-law in the Alban hills—the lady Agnesina de' Montefeltro being wife to the lord Fabrizio Colonna of Palestrina and Marino. The lady Emilia wrote that the castello of Marino was pleasantly situated above the town and looked over the lake of Albano, but that it was still in course of rebuilding after its destruction by the lord Cesare Borgia and that our lady found the noise of the masons in an adjoining tower disturbing. The lady Vittoria, marchioness of Pescara, was there with her parents for a time, and she and her aunt were much together and walked in the paths of the wooded enclosure in the cool evenings: there were expeditions also to many of the neighbouring antiquities, for the district had been resided in from the remotest ages, and emperors and senators had, later on, built their villas on the shores of the two lakes. The lady Emilia told of an early morning start for the lake of Nemi, which she said was called the Mirror of Diana because of a famous temple to that goddess at Algidus; but the purpose of the pilgrimage seemed to have been the inspection by the lord Fabrizio of a diving apparatus. A barge which had belonged to the emperor Caligula was sunk in the lake near the site of the temple, a hundred years ago the lord Cardinal Prospero Colonna had tried to raise it with rafts, and there was now ambition to succeed where he had failed.<sup>6</sup> We read of all this and hoped that our lady was finding distraction. But, on a day in July, rumour reached Marino that the Bull of Deprivation of Urbino was actually in preparation in the hands of scriveners, and ere nightfall on that day our lady was back in Rome, resolved, with a supreme and useless courage, to make a final entreaty.

Vainly do I unroll the unavailing tale to its end. The scattered courtiers and ladies were recalled to the palazzo, and, with a mounted escort, the train of litters made its way through the porta S. Paolo into the desert beyond the walls of Rome. The heat was stifling and the dust rose

in a choking haze under the feet of the mules and the horses. It was all horror, and Magliana itself horrible when we reached it, the battle-mented villa sprawling by the yellow river among uneasy meadows of tumbled yellow grass. There was a strong guard around the gateway, and the courtyard, which had a great well in the centre, was lined with pikemen, while the Pope's nephew, the lord Lorenzo de' Medici, mail-clad and helmeted, stood with drawn sword at the foot of the stairway. Our lady should have laughed at the craven absurdity of the demonstration, for here was all the contrast out of which the comic situation is made: this clanking figure had once been a wailing infant in the palazzo of Urbino with a court of ladies bending over its cradle in all the perturbation of inexperience. We ought to have tossed our careless laughter against the walls like the surf of which the sea is prodigal.

But perhaps our lady's proud carriage as she left Magliana was more humiliating to the Medici than any expression of contempt. There was always the breath of a classic wind about her gestures and the lines of her garments—something sculptured come to life—and I am convinced that Pope Leo would not have felt more ill-at-ease if he had waked on that stifling afternoon to find Pallas Athene herself confronting him; for a crime becomes a tawdry imposture when it is suddenly conscious of the gaze of a sovereign soul. This final supplication had been for the duchess Elisabetta an intolerable sacrifice of pride, and those who shrink from self-sacrifice are no doubt not wise; but I think I realised that the great simplicity which was the soil of her character, and in which so many rare flowers flourished, made her ineffectual, and that the injustice which is inherent in human affairs is not to be overcome by an unavailing wholeness of nature which seeks to value everything at its eternal worth, and regards all things and persons but as counters of something to be achieved beyond them.

We were kept waiting at the villa for the better part of an hour in a chamber that was to the left of the stair from the courtyard, and then a single chamberlain came to say that his Holiness was waked from his siesta and would see our lady and the lord Baldassare in his loggia. We of the retinue grouped ourselves at the stairhead to await their return, straining our ears unashamedly to try to snatch a meaning from the voices that came from the end of a short vista of open doors: we saw that the lord Lorenzo at the foot of the stair was looking upwards, and evidently at the loggia. He slunk away presently, and was not to be seen when our lady rejoined us, and we all descended to make our way back to Rome. I and the lady Margherita had chosen to brave the heat and to

ride, and as I wheeled my mule to follow the litter of the duchess, I caught sight of a great hulk and a great grey jowl under the open arches at the corner where the wing of the villa met the high courtyard wall.

It was cooler on the return journey and all the way to the city walls the sight of the pale crystalline mountain ranges far beyond them laid their healing spell upon the spirit. Back in the palazzo in the Corso, our lady commanded wine for us all, and, standing in our midst at the table where the goblets were presently laid out, she said, smiling faintly, that there was a very ancient saying *How hardly shall the great achieve greatness*: and that his Holiness needed our prayers. Thereon she went away to her wardrobe, and, when the pages had shut the doors on her, the lord Bernardo Accolti<sup>7</sup> exclaimed with a sudden fire that this august woman had at length reaped the only reward worthy of her, and one that had been in store for her since time began.

I spoke of it all later on to Monsignor Bembo; and I can suppose that he considered me too high-sounding, I saying I felt that, for the lady Elisabetta, the duchy with its mountain crests and green valleys, its running streams and little golden cities had been a kingdom of the soul; and it seemed to me a cruel enigma that all that decorated life of the soul which was for her the whole of life should have been swept away (and moreover for the second time) like a child's card castle. I remember how Pietro Bembo's long nose twitched as he made reply that the building of card castles was the whole business of the life of quality, and that unless we went on playing at it there should be no place for us around the table of life at all.

I never saw our lady again after she left Rome, for, two days previously, I was married, as had been for some little time arranged, to a member of the Strozzi family. Interest in the affair was necessarily perfunctory on the part of all, for the papal troops were getting ready for the invasion of the duchy and the Montefeltro household was breathless with preparation for escape: such it was felt to be. It was positive that his Holiness would take possession of the palazzo on the Corso as soon as the duchess had left, so that it was sought to dispose of the furnishings in safe keeping as far as possible, and the lord Baldassare was to and fro to the bankers and agents. The troops under the lord Lorenzo were hard behind the fugitives when the duchy was reached, but the duke Francesco made the final victory no easy one, and it was not until the following year that we heard that he with the two duchesses and the infant heir had been forced to take to the ships that were in readiness for them at Pesaro and that they had been wrecked on the



Dalmatian shore. The lord Baldassare, who was with them throughout it all, wrote later that our lady's brother, not daring to receive them in Mantua, had provided a little dwelling in Pietole for the two ladies, and that he himself was doing his best for their comfort with funds sadly lacking. Rome was illuminated to celebrate a triumph which seemed complete, for, although the duke Francesco got troops together again later on and began a war that left his Holiness bankrupt and bereft of reputation, yet he was not able to regain his duchy: all that was eventually ceded to him being some of the gear from the palazzo in Urbino, and including the library, and a promise which was never fulfilled to restore the dowries of the two duchesses.

There are those who would absolve his Holiness from impropriety in all this affair of Urbino, holding that the two assassinations, committed in boyish passion and to avenge his honour, unfitted the lord Francesco-Maria to be the ruler of a state. But while the papal army was raiding and harrying in Urbino to maintain, as I suppose, the purity of this thesis, the Cardinal Alfonso Petrucci and others met death in the dungeons of S. Angelo under circumstances which no one, however hardened, can recall without blenching. To have plotted against the life of the Sovereign-Pontiff was, my husband upheld, a crime for which a fitting punishment was needful, and that to insure necessary security to any state potential enemies must be kept in subjection. But he allowed my argument that the pursuit of security may degenerate into panic, and that it was panic which had directed the cruelties of San Angelo. It was at this time I know that Pietro Bembo formed a resolve that, when he had a sufficing sum in possession from the emoluments and the opportunities of his office, he would leave Rome, and a service which demanded from him so much for which he had a disrelish.

I must now go back somewhat in time to the year previous to our lady's pilgrimage to Rome, in order to record the marriage of the lord Giuliano de' Medici and to write of the wasting sickness of which he died while we were in the palazzo on the Corso.

The marriage had given gratification to all. The lord Giuliano had been a guest at the French court of king Louis more than once during the years of exile, and it was said that the duchess Louise of Orleans had even then spoken of her sister, the princess Filiberta of Savoy, as a possible wife for him. Now king Louis was dead, the duchess-mother of king Francis had become all powerful, the affair was concluded, the lord

Giuliano was given the title of duke of Nemours once borne by the lord Gaston de Foix, he visited Turin in the dukedom of Savoy, and the princess came to Rome with a blare of pageantry that was ill conceived: for she was a gentle lady, not young and not beautiful, and with no ambition to make a brilliance for herself out of her new position. Moreover she must soon have realised her husband to be a dying man. His ill-health had made his rule in Florence so lethargic that his Holiness had persuaded him to give place to the lord Lorenzo there, and to dwell in Rome as Gonfalonier of the Church and with the distinction of Patrician which was bestowed on him by the Senate at Pope Leo's suggestion. But after his marriage his great longing to return to Florence was not opposed; and there he died. The Cardinal da Bibbiena, who had a deep affection for him, hastened from Rome to be with him in those last hours that were spent in the loggia of the Badia at Fiesole looking down on Florence.

I think I knew a great insensibility about it all. For me the morning stars had once seemed to sing together, and I suppose that I had thereon unconsciously believed in an afternoon when the sons of God should shout for joy: then had come despair shorn of dignity, and that always benumbs or brutalises. I know that I heard of the marriage with what seemed to me a complete unconcern. In later years, and although Monsignor Sadoleto once declared to me that women seldom acquire moral self-knowledge, I came to realisation that the disaster which had befallen me was not inexplicable, that we rarely find ourselves struggling with an invisible enemy or with one foreign to us: that it is ourselves alone whom we meet on the highway of fate, and that nothing befalls us that is not of the nature of ourselves. In the white light of frailty avowed, I learnt that passionate love, however completely it has overwhelmed us, can never in itself affect our destiny, but that the knowledge of self buried deep down in that love alone helps to fashion life.

The Monsignor Bembo we had found in Rome was not altogether the lord Pietro we had known in Urbino, and madama Ippolita gave her tongue licence one day to comment on the infrequency of his appearances in the palazzo Montefeltro.<sup>8</sup> The lady Emilia responded to this very justly that Monsignor had now a responsible post to occupy and a daily task to be performed: but his lack of assiduity, as well as that of others, was a recognisable shabbiness. It was he, however, who came to us from the palazzo S. Pietro with the news of the death of the duke of Nemours which had just arrived there, and, as I have already

set forth, it led the duchess to entertain hopes that were to prove vain. Pietro Bembo was much moved as he told the circle gathered round the duchess that he had sent for the child Ippolito to be brought to his rooms and had told him as gently as he could what had befallen, for the boy, although only six years of age, was of great intelligence and had loved his father inordinately. Our lady asked if it were not possible for herself to make acquaintance with this orphaned scion of the Medici, and a few days later Monsignor brought him to us. The child was in mourning, with immense black rosettes on his tiny shoes, and his head rose out of his little crimped vest like that of a young hawk as he walked up the length of the Montefeltro chamber, holding fast to the lord Pietro's hand yet with a mien of independence and self-possession that was amazing in such a bantling; but when our lady took him on her knee he became at once a shy child, reluctant with his answers and stammering a little. Pietro Bembo brought him to me afterwards where I sat at my broidery by a window. I had made a funny little doll out of my coloured worsteds, and when I gave it to him his glee was intense, he standing first on one leg and then on the other and kissing my hand with willing perfunctoriness at Monsignor's bidding. I did not dare myself to kiss him, and turned back to my frame with hard-won unconcern.

That evening after supper there was a little masquerade with music by players and singers in the service of the Cardinal Farnese, and sent by him for our lady's entertainment, and under cover of this I found occasion to say to the lord Baldassare that I was very unwilling to return to the court life in Urbino, where I had felt, ever since my husband's death, that I was only tolerated because of my skill with my needle. He pointed out to me, with all his wonted kindness, that to remain behind in Rome would not be easy of accomplishment because I had no wealth to make me acceptable as a guest in one of the convents, that being the only reputable means of dwelling in the city for one of my condition: he did not suppose, he said, that I desired to take the Veil. He was without ribaldry, and so did not suggest, as others might have done, that there was another kind of veil which would make me free of the best society in Rome.<sup>9</sup> But next day when I was in attendance on our lady at Mass, the courtesan Isabella da Luna came decorously into the church with her train of footmen, pages and maids and with nobles and gentles as escort, and I could not help reflecting that here was the road to freedom, did I not know myself to be destitute of aplomb. There was nothing for it but another marriage for me, as Pietro Bembo had already said to me not long before, and I knew that the lord

Baldassare thought so too, and I was prepared for a proposition long before the expedition which he arranged one day for the lady Emilia, the lady Margherita, myself and others. We ought to see some of the antiquities of Rome, he declared, and, if we were prepared to go afoot, a very good friend of his who had an important position in the Strozzi bank and was of kin to that family was prepared to be our cicerone—he having much knowledge of all such matters. It was an expedition which fatigued us all greatly, and which I cannot recall without a smile, for our guide had an enthusiasm which made him oblivious to everything but his subject, and certainly (so it seemed) to myself. We were instructed that the Corso itself was the road begun by the consul Caius Flaminius to lead to the sea at Rimini, and we had to note what was antique among the modern buildings and the gardens, especially the colonnade which had enclosed the Horti Largiani, and the remains of the Porticus Vipsania facing the column of Marcus Aurelius, with its spaces all filled in for human habitation, and the two mutilated triumphal arches still spanning the roadway.<sup>10</sup> Beyond the church of San Lorenzo in Lucina (where we were shown the remains of the Horologium of the emperor Augustus) the Corso ran on between orchards and wretched hovels of women of ill-fame, and we turned to retrace our way back past the palazzo Montefeltro and that of San Marco beyond it, and to climb to the Capitoline: the task of displaying intelligence and interest had been resigned by the others into my hands long before we got there. On the summit of the hill behind the palazzo of the Senator, and where the temple of Jupiter had stood, goats were browsing among the great marble fragments of columns and friezes and pedestals that were strewn everywhere: clothes were hanging to dry lower down. It was a morning of golden mist which gave to everything a disembodied appearance. Perhaps what began for me in that hour was never absolute either. I do not desire to dwell on the affair. Let it suffice that I was wedded in the small church of Santa Maria<sup>11</sup> adjoining the palazzo two days before our lady left Rome, and went with my husband from the altar straight to my new home in the Canale di Ponte. Our lady was absorbed in her own overwhelming anxieties and had little attention to spare for me, but she gave me a rosary of black amber beads and enamelled roses which was of great beauty, and the lady Emilia showed an unexpected kindness and arranged that all should be done with seemliness and what ceremony was possible. I realised perfectly that this marriage was as good as I could expect to achieve and I was not unhappy in it. My husband had a citizen con-

ception of the duties of a wife, and I was irked perhaps at first by the narrow life in the rooms high up above the Strozzi bank, but I won through it all to his friendship and a greater freedom. He had been married twice previously and was twenty years older than myself. He had no family, and I myself bore him no children.

I lived in Rome until the year after Pope Leo died, when my son was eleven years of age. I know them to have been years of moment, and that I was spectator of a life of brilliance which attracted all the fashion, as well as all the scholars, the poets, and the artists of Europe. The Golden Age someone proclaimed it to be. It was a piece of drama no doubt, but drama beheld from behind the scenes does not quicken.

I had conceived an antipathy for Rome ever since I had first come to it across the endlessness of the sterile plain with serried ranks of white clouds in the leaden sky overhead. It had seemed to be suspended in a void: isolated in a great waste land which was empty of life and grace, and when reached at last, very strangely unemphatic. A hundred years had not quite gone by since Pope Martin V of the house of Colonna had found Rome in a state of devastation except for the great fortress towers of the nobles which still loomed here and there with their look of menace. Since then, within the wide circle of the walls of the emperor Aurelian building had gone on without ceasing, the Pope Sixtus IV alone, reconstructing twenty-five churches, paving many streets, making the ponte Sisto, the hospital of San Spirito, the Sixtine Chapel, the library of S. Pietro, and the university of the Capitoline: and effort had not been papal only, for Cardinals were ever restoring their own titular churches and adding palazzo to palazzo, vying with each other, and, so my husband would declaim, making shameless use of the fabric of the baths and temples of antiquity, and often burning priceless marble and porphyry for lime. On every side was splendour, but too often with the aspect of being patternless. Ceaseless destruction seemed to go on alongside a ceaseless making of what was large and disconnected and superfluous.

My husband, like nearly everybody else, was not insensitive to the glamour and the stimulation inherent in it all. He would say that all the vulgarities of the world came to Rome and seemed to be all right there, for their inappropriateness somehow added to the everlastingly pagan quality of things. And he had another axiom for me one Sunday morning, when, returned from Mass in San Giovanni, I found him with a

great bank ledger in our little sala. He smiled at me across it with a jest which caused me to retort that I had never yet met with God in any of the churches of Rome: thereon he ejaculated that any such expectation was fantastic for what was met in Rome everywhere, in the churches above all, was nothing but Rome itself.

Yet Rome always defied its own pursuit. As I have shown, it was as an antiquarian that I first made acquaintance with my husband, and that was no character assumed at the lord Castiglione's suggestion and for the day only: his interest in such research was real, and he made it his chief relaxation. He held, and would often demonstrate, that far too much was affirmed about Rome of old, and that the whole configuration and the slopes of the hills had been changed since ancient times and that certain of the valleys had been filled up. The arch of Severus, he said, was in itself a proof how far we lived above the ancient level, and in certain places he was convinced we were walking over the roofs of houses still intact and that the old streets lay three pikes' length beneath those in existence. He was scornful of the maps that Raffaello Sanzi and others were busied in making of the Rome of the emperors, and all he said gave me the feeling I never lost of dwelling on the surface of the sepulchre of a terrible power, and which might give way beneath me.

It was certain that a Roman of the time of the Cæsars would not have found his way about the city, for it was now crowded along the banks of the river as it had never been of old. I would now and then wander to the end of our street and stand on the bridge of San Angelo gazing at the waters' flow. After the winter rains the stream sometimes roared threateningly, but for most of the year it moved through Rome wearily, and without a sound, and so turbid in its age that it but rarely gave back the reflections of the houses which descended to its brink above the black vaults into which the water squelched. All was a jumble of masonry, of stairways green with moisture, of foot-bridges spanning courtyards, of galleries, and other houses yet atop, and clumps of trees growing, as it would seem, out of the very roofs themselves. But beyond this huddle of dwellings and all the narrow streets which went in and out between the Tiber, and the Corso, and the Capitoline hill, were vast tracts that were not crowded at all. Indeed I think that the greatest surprise I had about Rome was to find that within its gates were such considerable areas that were swamp and waste land, and others that were given over to the growing of vegetables for the market. This abundance of space had enabled every monastery to have its garden and every church its cemetery, and every palazzo its fortified enclosure.

It was all scattered and seemed haphazard: the district of the Borgo around San Pietro, and that of the Trastevere around Santa Cecilia alone had a sort of coherence.

Incoherence was perhaps the inevitable impression of an onlooker such as I was. The welding agency was that of life, and I was outside all the pulsating life.

In Urbino the welfare of the common people had been the preoccupation of its rulers, and that notably in the time of the duke Federigo, and of the duke Guidobaldo in emulation of his father's benevolence. None so mean but had right of access to the lord duke, and in the streets of the city he would be ever cap in hand and patient with all who would speak with him, so that the submerged existence of the Roman populace had for me something of outlawry and seemed sinister. There were towering tenements in which the swarming of life was manifest, but there was little evidence that the swarm made any claims. It would surge into the streets on days of spectacles and then it would melt away again. On these occasions I was struck by the ill-natured look of the men, but someone maintained to me that the look only meant an extreme diffidence, and that it concealed an imagination that took fire at a sign. Yet if the men had a poor bearing, the women with their bare black heads had conspicuous poise, and the gleam of a red apron of the colour of a crushed pomegranate would often make me oblivious to the filth of the person of its wearer. One seemed to see the women but seldom—only in flashes like that.

But the Roman native was, I believe, really but a small part of the population, for most of the trade of Rome was in the clutches of strangers from all the provinces of Italy, and from every state beyond the Alps and even from beyond the seas. In the streets that went in and out among the great palazzi near the Campo Fiori most of the best shops were to be found. I discovered that for perfumes, gloves, and musical instruments one must seek a French sign, that a German guild had all the business of baking in its hands, and that the booksellers seemed to be Spanish. Everybody dressed so richly, and the houses, even of the tradesmen, were so luxuriously furnished that there was a very large sale for articles of apparel and for household gear of every kind. It was said that the Milanese draper Pietro Litta, whose shop was always thronged, had amassed great riches. It was the fashion to require that all damasks and velvets and silks should be of Florentine manufacture, and fabrics from Genoa, from France, and even from Persia were sold spuriously as Florentine. Florentine families owned most of the banks.

At the corner of the *via dei Banchi Nuovo* where it met the *via del Consolato* was that of the brothers Piero and Giovanni Bini of Florence. It was known that his Holiness was deeply in their debt, and that they had in their keeping as security various jewelled mitres of bygone Popes and the priceless tiara of his late Holiness Julius, as well as all the pontifical sacred vessels. The bank, which had a very forbidding frontage to the street, had a graceful court and loggia, and messer Giovanni Bini took me one day into the hall where all the clerks sat at their desks under a vaulted ceiling on which the arms of the family were painted in a captivating design. He told me that it was a composition by msr Pierino del Voga, and that the same artist had decorated the palazzo of the Fugger family near by. This German bank was of utility to his Holiness as well, for by its means were remitted all the proceeds of the sale of Indulgences in Germany. But the richest of all the bankers and merchants, whose wealth none could rival, was of course messer Agostino Chigi, the Sienese, who had succeeded to the business of the Spanocchi and for whom, at the time of my marriage, Raffaello Sanzi was decorating a palazzo on the opposite bank of the Tiber. The bankers had their fingers on the pulse of all the trade of Rome and that is how I, who lived over a bank, unwittingly became so alive to all that side of the city's existence. I would not make an endless catalogue, but no summary should leave unmentioned the perpetual employment in building, all in the hands of Lombards, the timber that came down the Tiber from the distant forests to the quay of the Ripetta to warm the city, or the traffic in wine from Greece and from Corsica. And I have said nothing of the many printing presses, and ought not to leave unmentioned that of messer Antonio Blado of Asola (a pupil of messer Aldo Manuzio of Venice) who rented an office in the palazzo of the Massimi<sup>12</sup> formerly occupied by some printers from Mayence who had brought out the first edition of the epistles of Cicero there.

With so much going and coming to and from the ends of the earth, especially at the time of the pilgrimages, it was needed that inns should abound. The better sort were mainly in the neighbourhood of the *Campo dei Fiori*, and in the *Borgo* quarter round *San Pietro*, where the pilgrims thronged, there was an immense number, and the inn-keepers there had formed a corporation to keep up their prices. Certain inns like the *Campana* in the *via Capellari* were frequented only by Germans, others were frequented only by Jews. There was tolerance for the Jews in Rome in the time of the Medici Popes, and they were not confined to a ghetto, but lived in freedom in the *Rione S. Angelo*. They had their



synagogue and a medical school there, and the physician of his Holiness, messer Emmanuel Bonetti, was a Jew. Heretics too went unmolested. Quite near to the square of San Pietro in the Vicolo de Simbaldi was an inn with the swinging sign of a Silver Hedgehog where it was well known that free-thinkers of all nations met together. The host was a Bohemian, and with the name of Giovanni Khromy, and he was said to be a follower of one Giovanni Huss. There were those, even among the Cardinals, who considered that overmuch good nature in such matters was not rational, but what would have seemed a laxity elsewhere took on very little importance in an atmosphere of so many exuberances.

There seemed to be profusion in Rome of everything but noble families of old lineage. It took me some time to realise that, and the effect it had on all social life. The Frangipani, the Cenci, the Savelli, the Caetani, and many others were legendary names even to one of provincial upbringing like myself, and it was disconcerting to find that time had impoverished or decimated nearly all of them. Because of their immense possessions and invincible pugnacity the Colonna and the Orsini still thrived and flourished, yet neither family made its headquarters in Rome itself but lived for most of the year in its great castles in the country. There was a newer nobility which owed its origin to wealth acquired in one way or another through the Papacy, but it had not yet acquired the habits of leadership, and had none of the strong caste feeling of the old families who had occupied existence so much to their own satisfaction with feuds among themselves. There were the Farnese of very recent fortune (if with a long ancestry), the Boccapaduli, the Atheri, the Cesarini: none of them possessed the old brick fortresses which had been the habitations of the antique baronial families in Rome and they were, or had been, all very busy building vast modern palazzi for themselves in the unpopulated quarters where they could surround themselves with gardens. Some of them took part in the municipal life, were honourable figures in all the ceremonies and feste, and lived peacefully in the shade of the Papacy. But ambition to make a world for themselves, to use exquisite mundane things as a means of escape from the heartlessness of truth—ambition to form and rule that which has ever been meant by Society—that did not appear to exist. These new palazzi produced no great ladies. The distinguished receptions of Rome were the creation of certain of the Cardinals, and the women who shone there were the great courtesans.

Immediately after his enthronement his Holiness had issued a Bull which the lord Castiglione had translated into the vernacular for us one evening in the court circle at Urbino, and our lady, with tears in her eyes, had said that we must give thanks to our Lord God that He had raised up a Pontiff who would make the purification of Holy Church his first aim. The Bull exhorted the Cardinals, in particular, to live soberly, chastely and piously: to abstain not only from evil but from all appearance of evil, and to fulfil their religious duties with exactness. It recommended them, further, to avoid all useless pomp in their houses and equipages and on their table, to use discretion in dress, and to practise both economy and dignity of life.<sup>13</sup>

Cardinal da Bibbiena must have had a hand in this composition, and it is more than probable that it was he who first laughed at it. Nothing in Rome escaped the fate of becoming fuel for laughter, and between gravity and folly no barrier was ever set. The desire to lead life gaily was a contagion of the atmosphere, and largeness of life was an imperative. Moreover it should ever be recollected that the upbringing of most of the members of the Sacred College had been princely, and that to expect the sedateness of the yeoman or the burgess was to demand an impossible counsel of perfection. After the treasonable intrigue of the Cardinal Petrucci, his Holiness, desiring to swamp disaffection effectively, had borne down opposition and had created thirty-three new Cardinals. This, I understand, was unprecedented—but what I would rather say is that, although his choice included the Principals of the Orders of the Augustinians, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans, as well as Adrian of Utrecht the austere tutor of king Charles of Spain, yet the creation at large was of those well versed in all the ways of this world. Two of the new Cardinals were the prince Louis of Bourbon, and the prince Alfonso of Portugal, while some were wealthy and distinguished citizens of Rome; the warrior lord Pompeo, and the lord Franciotto (a widower with five children) represented, respectively, the Colonna and Orsini families; other three were nephews of his Holiness; and, for the rest, there did not seem to be any important city in Italy that had not been complimented. It all made for greater festivity, because each Prince of the Church, with very few exceptions, conceived routs and banquets as behoving the duties of his position, and there was a natural ambition to excel.

My husband's calling took him at one time or another into nearly all the palazzi that the Cardinals rented or purchased, or built for themselves. They were spread all over Rome. Many were in the Borgo, a

number in the piazza Scossa Cavelli between San Pietro and San Angelo, a few in the via Giulia, some in the Corso, others in the Campo dei Fiore. My husband would say that all these ecclesiastical dwellings were alike in this, that each possessed a monumental staircase rising out of the inner court, and all vied with one another in the grandeur of the great chambers on the first floor, opening the one from the other, and decorated with all that was most sumptuous—with frescoes by renowned artists, with rich hangings and carpets, with furnishings by the best craftsmen, and, above all, with marbles and bronzes from the excavations of the ancient city. In the collection of antiquities of every kind there was a fierce rivalry, and to own the most precious manuscripts, the finest jewels, and the most gorgeous gold and silver plate was imperative.

It was all token of a highly vitalised awareness, of that enlargement in the region of the possible which makes incessant demands on the consciousness. But it was an ambiguity too, for, as always in Rome, there crept in the perception of that confusing beauty of evil which leads one to doubt if there is any distinction between evil and good. And it was all streaked through with the insanity of over-spending. The Cardinals were very wealthy in varying degrees—Cardinal Passerini, for instance, possessed, I know, the revenues of sixty-three benefices—but he, and most of the others, were in debt to the banks and most of their treasures were mortgaged. Gambling of course was rife, and for high stakes. The most magnificent of all the palazzi in Rome, that of Cardinal Riario in the Campo dei Fiore, was the outcome of an evening's play when he was reported to have won the sixty thousand ducats which enabled him to begin to build. I suppose it was all an idolatry of false joys: I realise it to have been so: but it was a great mortification to find myself an exile from the brilliance of it all. It was a masculine society, to which, apart from certain highly placed women relatives, the courtesans alone had entry. Should any renowned princess visit Rome, she and her ladies were at once made the occasion for joyous entertainment, but the gentlewomen of the city rarely climbed the vast staircases between the lacqueys and the torches to spend the hours until dawn in diversions, generally wonted enough I suppose, but which undoubtedly often lapsed into buffoonery.

This strange taste for buffoonery was one of Rome's new experiences for me, because it had been almost unknown at the court of Urbino, and I found extraordinary the travesty of wit and humour in men whose love of learning and art was deep and real. As regards the Pope himself

I feel it was the Florentine in him which luxuriated in antic-mummery, and the unspeakable and clownish tricks his Holiness would play on those invited to supper with him were invariably the banter of Rome next day: for pleasure in what was both gross and fatuous was not a monopoly of the Florentine. I do not think that it was altogether the secret spite of dullness in myself which made me decide that fun is only tolerable when it spoils nothing better and is detached from consequences. Carnival had been unknown in Rome before the time of the Venetian Pope Paul II who introduced it (1465) hoping that it would wean the people from more brutal sports. But just as the Grecian athletes of old had become gladiators when transported to Rome, so in like manner had Carnival been transformed by the soil in which it was planted. The Roman spirit of Carnival was cruel with a heartless levity, and I cannot sully paper with any details of the scenes in the Corso and in the piazze Venezia and Colonna when Lent came round, nor describe the hellish pranks played on the aged and the crippled, and on Jews and criminals. Moreover real Carnival is, in essence, just relief and infrequent suspension of a proper use of the understanding, but in Rome it had become a habit of the mind: and nothing is so certain as that persistent levity undermines the only foundation on which the power of a jest to amuse us really rests—that foundation being the sense of the seriousness and reality of things. However lustily we are able to appreciate the fugitive quip about morality, we cannot derive pleasure from incessant derision of it if we have any care for morality itself; and the stage set up so often in the great hall of the palazzo S. Pietro, which was named after his Holiness Innocent VIII, was a complete betrayal of the thoroughness with which all sensibility about moral virtue was corroded in the tittering audiences gathered together there around the raised seat of a Pope convulsed with laughter. I am vehement, and it betrays ill-breeding to be so emphatic, but I think I am excused when I recall that a child, who was my son, would invariably be sitting or standing during these performances on the steps of the papal dais. It has been denied I know, but it is within my knowledge that, about the time of the Carnival of the year of our Lord 1520, the *Mandragola* of messer Niccolò Machiavelli of Florence was given on the stage of S. Pietro. I make no comment, for my husband asked me not to read it, and I have never done so, and it has never been discussed in my company. But in a previous year there had been played on the same stage the comedy of *Cassaria* which the marchioness of Mantua, assuredly no bigot in such matters, had refused to attend and had forbidden to her ladies, when it

was given at the court of Ferrara at the time of the marriage of the lady Lucrezia Borgia. It was the Cardinal da Bibbiena who was the director of all Pope Leo's festivities. He is to me an ever-pleasant memory, but although his own play *Calandria* has a plot that is not actually licentious; yet I cannot deny that its dialogue is gross and viciously cynical. The idea of the plot was derived from the *Menoechmi* of Plautus, and I realise that all this weltering of words in a certain form of depravity did not of necessity mean a personal baseness, but was rather the clumsy gesture of one culture making a feverish cult of the memory of another which lay beneath its feet. Adherence to the Latin tradition (which I do not need Pietro Bembo to remind me means Virgil and Cicero in the first place) has preserved the imperial halo for the later Rome of Christianity, and there is I think something of a national pride in pre-eminence mingled with the persistence in exploiting the classical in all its forms and in seeking to project the feelings of today on to the classical picture. Such is my rumination about it all: nevertheless it was to be deplored that it did not make for an atmosphere in which youth might be godly brought up.

I had married in order to remain in Rome, but for some little time it seemed to be a useless abnegation, for I obtained no sight of Ippolito. Women were sometimes invited to the papal banquets, and to the evening's entertainment of music or masque, or stage-play that followed, but these were exclusively women of the Medici related to his Holiness, or noble ladies from distant states or from foreign countries who were visiting Rome. The courtesans<sup>14</sup> were never seen at the Pope's assemblies, and dancing was an exceptional pastime; and even those among the younger of the Cardinals who were wont to dance at the receptions in their own palazzi knew that they might not venture it beneath the eye of his Holiness. In all matters concerning womankind outward decorum was observed, and it was not a possibility for me to visit Monsignor Bembo or Sadoletto in the palazzo of S. Pietro without the escort of my husband, and he forever too occupied for it. Monsignor Bembo, however, was my friend in his persistence, and one day the matter was achieved, because my husband had a curiosity to see the painting in the bathroom of the Cardinal da Bibbiena which had been imitated by messer Raffaello Sanzi and his pupils from a fresco in a recently excavated chamber in the Palatine.

It was not very far across the river by the ponte di Fiorentini to San Pietro. We had to make our way to the cortile of San Damaso in the

palazzo, and my husband pointed to windows above the loggia on the second storey on the left and told me to be prepared to climb. He said that the apartments behind the loggia were those that Pope Julius had lived in, and that previously they had been occupied by the lord Cesare Borgia, the Borgia Pope dwelling beneath him, on the first floor, in rooms painted in fresco by Bernadino Betti. He told me further that the loggia itself and the rooms behind it had all been redecorated by messer Raffaello Sanzi, whose pupils were still at work there; and that rumour had it that the Cardinal da Bibbiena had greatly desired for himself the Borgia apartments below which were now unoccupied, but that the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici had intervened with his Holiness, and his Eminence da Bibbiena had to be contented with a dwelling nearer heaven. It could indeed be not far from heaven, I gasped, when we had attained to the head of the brick stair.

I anticipated that we might not be received by the Cardinal himself, but it was to his ante-chamber we were conducted, and Monsignor Bembo met us there and led us into a splendid room beyond it, where, with all his gaiety and charm, the Cardinal made us welcome. My acquaintance with him in Urbino had really been perfunctory (I being of but little importance) so that I had to suppress bewilderment when I listened to him making for my husband with the most intriguing flattery a picture of my supremacy among the ladies of the duchess: the high standing of my family and my virtuous upbringing, my so varied talents, my unvarying rectitude and modesty, and my total inaccessibility to all addresses, were woven lightly into his theme, and with such a master hand that I was left without embarrassment and my husband with the high assurance of the unassailability of his own judgment.

The bedchamber and the bath of his Eminence, displayed to us presently, were worthy of the admiration we expressed. The great canopy over the bed was draped with a silk damask of glowing apricot colour all edged with an intricate braiding of gold, and over a coverlet worked with a device of roses in the finest stitchery was a smaller one of green satin filled with feathers. This feather quilt, so Pietro Bembo told us, had been sent to the Cardinal from Mantua by the marchioness Isabella after a recent visit she had paid to Rome, and he himself had dispatched a petition to Mantua for one like it and lived in the hope that his prayer would be granted. The bathroom was annexed to the bedroom, with the bath of marble sunk into the floor, and my husband stood holding his beard and gazing critically at messer Sanzi's work on the walls. The design was the story of Venus and Cupid, and Pietro Bembo asked me,

as one who had known the artist in immaturity in Urbino, if I would not agree that it was contact with the great classical tradition and the atmosphere of Rome which had made him into the transcendent master of line and of design that he now was, and that he could never have found himself apart from Rome. We were presently interrupted in our exchange of convictions by my husband, who broke his silence to say that he always doubted when he studied messer Sanzi's work if he had truly found himself, for if we would compare these walls with those in the Palatine, unearthed from the Rome of old, we would discover that what this artist had really done to the fresco was to thaw it without transforming it. Monsignor Bembo arched his eyebrows over this, and my husband became insistent in his own terse way, seeking to prove that Raffaello Sanzi had done all that in him lay to substitute classic proportion for relation, and drawing for light and space, but a dissatisfaction within himself had been shattering, and a secret tendency to depths and distances was there, like faint music, in all to which he put his hand. In his own opinion my husband concluded, messer Raffaello, in achieving the utmost that was possible as regards form, had strained convention to a breaking point where art must in the future take a plunge that could not be shirked: it would be interesting to live long enough to see the outcome.

With the laughing agreement that it would be delightful to live for ever, we returned to the room where the Cardinal was now sitting by a table of mosaic on which wine and sweetmeats had been placed. Pietro Bembo told him of our disputation, and he said that it was an interesting and illuminating theory on which he should ponder. What after all was the classical tradition, he pursued, as we took our places at the table: it was nothing native to Rome, whose soil had always been sterile, but who, having receptivity to a high degree, had always gathered in the arts of aliens, brutalising them a little and making them ostentatious and arrogant. It was the vogue to suppose that the Parthenon at Athens was the sole inspiration for classic Rome, but those learned in archæology like my husband knew full well that other and far older influences had prevailed too. The emperor Hadrian in the Rotunda<sup>15</sup> had obviously imitated some temple he had seen in Asia, the baths of Caracalla had been built by Syrian workmen, and the emperor Trajan had constantly employed an architect from Damascus—one Apollodorus. We had really made a dream out of something that never existed: for instance, that greatest of all the modern buildings of Florence, the new palazzo of the Strozzi, was a striking example of the perversion of an idea. The Car-

dinal would have reached Florence by some other road if this one had not been available: he wished to make the Medici family his theme.

My husband said to me that evening when we were alone at supper, that the superb Greek wine which the Cardinal had provided for our entertainment had, he feared, loosened his tongue unduly, and that he hoped nothing untoward would come of any of his indiscretions. I, who had only nibbled sugared almonds, and who had followed all that passed with alert estimation, could partly reassure him. The Cardinal had been disarming, for he had confided laughingly that his new majesty of France thought the lord Lorenzo de' Medici a simpleton who played at being a great man, doubted if he would ever be able to keep the duchy of Urbino, and was sure Florence would eject him sooner or later. King Francis, said his Eminence, had all the rashness of judgment of vivacious youth, and he himself wondered what the truth really was. My husband had replied to this that he sometimes wondered too: that he did not consider the lord Lorenzo capable of great things, but he did consider him astute, and he had undeniably contrived to become master of Florence, made a considerable display there, and acted and talked as if he had taken his place among crowned heads. He might be the founder of a dynasty yet, jested the Cardinal, but his mother must find him a royal bride with all dispatch if the house of Medici was to have a future. To which my husband had interrupted (as I believe he was meant to) that there was always the younger branch of the family, now represented by the lord Piero Francesco and by his cousin the warrior lord Giovanni de' Medici: and then the Cardinal had murmured that of the elder branch there were the two bastards.

I had often wondered if I should ever find assurance to enable me to question my husband about the child of Anna da Collo who had been taken to Florence. Nothing had ever been said about the boy in my hearing by anybody. I now learned all that I wanted to know, for the Cardinal was quite open in his curiosity, and my husband was equally open in satisfying it, saying that he knew very little except that the child was still in the Medici palazzo and was generally believed by the Florentine public to be the son of the lord Lorenzo. The Cardinal and Msgr Bembo both smiled at this, and Monsignor said that it was certainly the most convenient theory, and he hoped that the putative father would provide a fitting upbringing for the young Alessandro. My husband made answer that all he had learnt about the matter was from the lady Clarice Strozzi, and that it would be readily understood that neither she nor other ladies of the Medici family were enthusiastic about the



existence of the two boys who were growing up in Florence and in Rome. Alessandro, the lady Clarice declared, was a repulsive child with a dusky skin, thick lips and matted hair. If the Cardinal Giulio was indeed his father there was therefore no physical likeness to betray it, and although the Cardinal concerned himself with the welfare of the boy and had lately ordained some instruction for him, that might be a mere matter of equity, and very likely at the behest of his Holiness. The Cardinal da Bibbiena said that might be so of course. He said it with the utmost gravity. But Pietro Bembo laughed with his own particular sardonic glee, and rose and refilled my husband's goblet.

I realised the parentage of this Alessandro to be now a fact adroitly established in my husband's mind for propagation. He observed presently that at all events there had never been any denial that the lord Giuliano de' Medici was the father of the boy who was in Rome: and, while I caught at my breath, the Cardinal agreed, and added that the mother was equally well known—and he named, with unruffled audacity, a certain lady of Pesaro. It was so urbane and unstressed, and so entirely convincing that I well-nigh believed in it myself, and when a command was given to bring the young Ippolito, I sat waiting with an unconcern almost as authentic as it looked, while the Cardinal told us of the lavish affection of his Holiness for his nephew and of the care that was being expended on the boy's education. A prodigy should be the result he said, but that happily the young resisted all the efforts to make them obnoxious.

A high-pitched child's voice was shortly heard expostulating in the ante-room, and Ippolito came through the doors carrying a tawny kitten with green eyes from which he had evidently refused to be separated. He was taller than when I had seen him in the Montefeltro palazzo, he was wearing orange hose and a jerkin of sapphire blue, he walked with the confidence of a prince, and he was all explicit charm and unshattered promise. He knew exactly how he must behave, and, behaviour accomplished, he went straight to the Cardinal who put an arm around him. He stood there leaning against the Dovitzi's shoulder and regarding my husband and me unsmilingly with his fathomless eyes. He did not remember me, nor was I so fatuous as to recall to him the little doll I had made out of my worsted. When we took our leave my husband asked if he might show me the rooms below, and Mgr Bembo, saying that he would come with us, demanded of Ippolito if he would not come too; but the boy shook his head, and as I looked back from the other side of the doorway I saw that he had put the kitten on

the Cardinal's shoulder, and that the two of them were trying to induce the small creature to walk along his Eminence's outstretched arm.

Pietro Bembo thought me, I know, foolish and petulant when we arrived in the decorated apartments underneath and I declined to be rapturous; but I had always been of the opinion that Raffaello Sanzi said too much, and that too emphatically, when he was confronted with a wall-space or a ceiling. I knew that there was a portrait of Ippolito in one of the most recent of the frescoes, and Mgr Bembo pointed it out to us on the right of the door in the first of the painted chambers. I felt a surge of anger as I looked at it. The subject was the coronation of the emperor Charlemagne, and the boy in the centre of the scene, holding up the emperor's train, not only had fat legs that were a libel on Ippolito's graceful limbs, but he was looking over his shoulder at the spectator with an expression that was all knowledge and all derision. I believe Pietro Bembo must have guessed what was in my mind, and very likely my countenance betrayed me, for he said to my husband that it had been most unfortunate that the young nephew of his Holiness had taken an unaccountable dislike to messer Sanzi, and had been so graceless as to deserve a whipping; but he thought the painter unauthorised in perpetuating the naughtiness. My husband made answer that the boy bore a strong resemblance to the lord Giuliano, but it was evident he had not inherited his father's thoughtful and gentle nature for the angle of his eyebrow and the set of his red underlip were a positive sign that his reason for doing anything would always be the weather in his soul and nothing else. Mgr Bembo smiled at this, saying he felt it to be true, but that perchance such weather would bring him some day greatly into port.

The next room had been the private audience chamber of Pope Julius, and I well remembered Raffaello setting out from Urbino to paint it in obedience to the summons of his imperious Holiness. It had taken him 3 years, and during all that time, I was now told, Michelagnolo Buonorrotti was lying on his back on scaffolding in the Sistine Chapel close by painting the vault of the ceiling there. It was a pity that these two immortal geniuses were not better friends said Mgr Bembo, and I had the hardihood to wonder aloud if there was anything absolute about art, and if it were not precipitancy to label any artist, and above all in his lifetime, as immortal. And I felt justified in this temerity after we had traversed a third room, on which Pope Leo had set messer Raffaello to work immediately after his coronation, and a fourth, still decorated with the frescoes of Pietro Perugino:<sup>16</sup> for we reached an

ante-chamber with a decorated wooden ceiling, and out of which opened what had been the bedchamber, not only of Pope Julius, but of Pope Nicholas V who had employed Fra Giovanni da Fiesole (called Fra Angelico) to paint the little chapel alongside it. This was a tiny place: as we crossed its threshold my husband took hold of my arm above the elbow, and the pressure of his fingers asked me to be silent when, as we stood within, Monsignor told us with genuine nonchalance that it was decided to wall the chapel up.<sup>17</sup> My husband replied, after a pause which I felt to be leaden, that he thought the decision not surprising, and that, in the midst of the new splendours of the palazzo S. Pietro this monk's fantasies were misplaced.

My consort was sometimes a surprise to me. I could not doubt his feeling to be that these lucid unsubstantialities on the narrow walls were magic casements opening on to the reality behind this universe, and that this tranquil spot was a Holy of Holies strayed hither in a fit of aberration: and yet he was very bald, and somewhat full of figure, and he spent his days in a counting house. I appreciated to the full the malice which lay behind his bland comment that an alternative to walling up would be to get messer Sanzi to paint over these frescoes as he had done in the case of the frescoes of other artists in the other rooms. Monsignor said indifferently that might certainly be considered if Raffaello could ever find time for it, and then he took us across the ante-chamber and out on to the loggia, where scaffolding was erected and several young men were busy with paint pots and brushes. But I was not interested in what they were doing, for, framed by the last two or three of the arcades, was the spectacle of Rome itself, lying on the bosom of its wooded hills and wrapt in the soft caress of the pale evening. I make no doubt it is true that landscape with its vague suggestion appeals to us in the present day because it is the stimulation of our own emotions and dreams, and that the ancients, with their definite images of nymphs, and fauns, and dryads, and fondness for the definite things landscape contains, were not a whit behind us in a love of nature: but as I leaned on the balustrade between Pietro Bembo and my husband, and as, trampling clumsily on my skirts and ruffling the crisp of my sleeves, they pursued this theme full-cry over my head, I pondered on the strange creature man, and his gusto for killing a perfect moment in pursuit of an abstraction.

My husband and I sat late at supper that evening discussing all that had passed, and I said I felt that a certain insensitiveness had grown in Pietro Bembo since the days in Urbino, when, although he so often had his

tongue in his cheek, yet had of us all, so I used to think, the finest apprehension of the things that appertain to the spirit; I instancing his enthusiasm for the poems of Dante Alighieri which he would often read aloud to us in our quieter hours. My husband (who would sometimes seem to me to be possessed of all knowledge) said that this love of Dante had been bred in Monsignor, for his father, the lord Bernardo Bembo of Venice, had so great a reverence for the poet, that he had restored the shrine above his grave in Ravenna: but, added my husband, what did I suppose Noah was like when his segregation with the animals in the ark came to an end: and I not understanding his meaning, he told me this story from the Pentateuch, adding that the walls Pope Leo was building around the precincts of S. Pietro made the analogy very apt. He spoke of Ippolito growing up within those walls, and disclosed to me that he was quite aware of deliberate intention when the subject of the parentage of the two boys, Ippolito and Alessandro, was raised: the Cardinal de' Medici he said was becoming a dangerous rival of the Cardinal da Bibbiena with his Holiness, and although it was irrational of the Princes of the Church to begin throwing stones at one another, yet, undoubtedly, there were degrees of discredit in these affairs.

But it was what my husband had let drop about the women of the Medici family that took effective root in my mind, and I began to decide that the lady Clarice Strozzi, over whose head I was living, was a link with the Medici which I had foolishly ignored. I decided that I must make myself indispensable in some way to the lady Clarice.

Now that I look back on those years in Rome I know myself to be of the opinion that a Pope who has no reigning mistress in his life does well if he relegates women to the outer world of society. It was the foothold which Pope Leo gave with unreflecting good nature to the female relations to whom he had always been accustomed which worked so largely for his disintegration. The Medici women overflowed the Medici palazzo in the Eustachio quarter, and there the Pope was to be found almost daily when he was in Rome. After the death of the Borgia this palazzo with its frontage on the piazza Lombardia<sup>\*8</sup> had been rented by the Medici from the family of the Montoria, and it had now become their property by purchase. His Holiness, as Cardinal, had spent largely on it, and he was especially proud of the library which he had ornamented with frescoes, and where he had placed the books which had been collected in Florence by his father, which had been dispersed, but

which he had been at great pains and expense to discover here and there and to re-purchase.

The lady ALFONSINA DE' MEDICI, widow of the lord Piero, and sister-in-law of his Holiness, had all the pre-eminence which is yielded to outspoken capacity: Jacopo Sadoletto, ever sparse of speech, said of her *the dragon from the dragon-seed*. Daughter of the lord Roberto Orsini, grand constable of Naples, she had always been too downright in methods and bearing to gratify Florence, and the unpopularity of the Medici there after the death of her father-in-law may have been due in great part to this, as many aver. After the exile she had chosen to live in Rome where the prestige of her own fierce family was ever maintained and where her influence could more easily be exercised. She was now over 40 years of age, too massive for beauty, but debonair in carriage, and incisive in manner. Her single-minded aim to leave no stone unturned to push the fortunes of her son and daughter did not make her odious because her ability and sense were unquestioned. It was a tribute to her commanding character that she was furnished with a copy of the terms of peace after the battle of Marignano, and I am without doubt that, in all the affair of Urbino, it was she who was the prevailing influence. She could assume a frank air that was disarming, and she knew the effectiveness of occasional vehemence.

The lady CLARICE STROZZI, her daughter, had inherited her activity of mind and her energy, but with a pride of being of the Medici rather than of the Orsini. Now that the Medici star was high in heaven, I imagined, but without anything really tangible to give ground for the surmise, that the lady Clarice found her status in Rome as wife of the lord Filippo Strozzi, the banker, was somewhat galling; although, at the time she was ripe for marriage, the influence of the Strozzi family in Florence had made the match seem so desirable that the lady Alfonsina had broken off the tentative negotiations with the lord Baldassare Castiglione. I had it from my husband that although the Strozzi wealth could not vie with that of the Chigi, it was yet immense. But the lord Filippo Strozzi was governed by a prudence which not even the undoubted influence of his wife could modify much. Although he had a dark reputation as regards morals, he treated her with great gallantry and was an indulgent father to the children she bore him; but he ever maintained a smiling obstinacy in the matter of setting up a princely household or of taking a conspicuous place in the world, reminding her that his marriage to a Medici had meant for him a sentence of three years' exile from Florence which had inconvenienced him greatly at the

time. Nevertheless the lady Clarice was not hampered in her Medici instinct to surround herself with the beautiful and the rare. The chambers above the bank were comparatively small, but they, and those of the villa in the Alban hills, were notable for their taste: and when it was positive that the lord Filippo could not be prevailed on to desert the Canale di Ponte, his wife did not cease to express envy for a very elegant palazzo of moderate size at the end of the via del Banco San Spirito, and which was in course of construction for messer Giovanni Gaddi, the clerk of the Camera. In due course the Strozzi found means to get possession of this, the lady Clarice rejoicing that she would be able to embellish it after her own mind.<sup>19</sup> She herself was always apparelled with a sumptuous confidence, and she faced the world with a resolute vivacity. The mother and daughter in fact had form and poise, and if they wanted a great deal, it has to be remembered that the woman who wants nothing is meanly endowed. It was not they, but rather the sisters of his Holiness, who effected a banalisation. Both of them were slovenly in bearing and in dress, voluble in speech that was without distinction; but withal, most curiously prevailing.

The two younger of the Medici sisters were dead. The lady Luigia had died in girlhood, and the lady Contessina, wife of Piero Ridolfi of Florence, had died in Rome just before my own arrival there: she, as well as her elder sisters, having transported herself and her family to Rome immediately she had received the news of her brother's election as Pope.

The eldest sister, the lady LUCREZIA SALVIATI, had been married for as long as twenty-five years when this great event took place. She had been given into the Salviati family of Florence in order to re-establish friendship with them after Archbishop Salviati had been hung out of a window on the afternoon of the murder of her uncle the lord Giuliano de' Medici in the Duomo. After the exile of her brothers, the Salviati palazzo in the Corso in Florence became the centre of intrigues, for the Medici women ever remained Medici. It is said that in the very hour that the rumour of the election of Pope Leo reached her she began her preparations to move her large household, and she was the first of the sisters to reach Rome, establishing herself in the Salviati palazzo in the Borgo. Her temper of a known violence made her never easy to withstand, but his Holiness did not succumb immediately to her insistence on a Cardinal's hat for her son Giovanni, who may have been like other men but who looked like an idiot. Others of her eleven children had, however, both capacity and demeanour, and notably the lady Maria,

whom she had married to that lord Giovanni de' Medici of whom my husband had made mention—he being, in the opinion of many who talked behind doors, a possible heir to the lordship of Florence in default of the lord Lorenzo. On the first occasion that I attended the lady Clarice to the palazzo Salviati, the lady Lucrezia received us with clamorous good nature in the midst of a confusion of circumstances and persons, and peering at myself, a stranger to her, with her protruding, near-sighted eyes. At first I heeded her warily as one whose lack of quality might incline to an indulgence in small enmities, but the lady Clarice, careless in dispraise of her aunts, discovered her to me as too encompassed with profitable traffic in offices and honours to be attentive to aught else.

The lady MADDELENA CIBO was the sister for whom his Holiness had no doubt the greater liking. To her he owed much. In order to obtain Pope Innocenzo's promise of the red hat for him when he was a boy of seven years old, she had been given at the age of fifteen, together with a great dowry, to the Pope's son Francesco Cibo. He was twenty-five years older than his wife, and I surmise that he had always been doltish and a gambler. Cardinal Giovanni had made his home with them in Genoa after his travels in Germany and France, when he had not dared to return to the Rome of the Borgias, and it was fitting that he should have remembered all this when he created their son Innocenzo one of his first Cardinals<sup>20</sup> and provided the governorship of Spoleto for his brother-in-law. The lady Maddelena may, I think, have had elegance as a younger woman, but her health was not good, and it was as if she had a perpetual guilty anticipation of fatigue and a sense of not rising to the occasion. She had, however, much of the Medici charm of manner, and was popular in Rome where she was lodged in the Medici palazzo, with her family. Her daughters endeared themselves especially to their uncle by their merry spirits.

But indeed his Holiness delighted in the company of all his nieces whether of the Cibo, the Salviati or the Ridolfi, and it was, I am convinced, the atmosphere of irresponsible youth he found there which took him so often to the piazza Lombardia: his library of books which he had left in the palazzo always making a respectable reason for his escape from his secretaries and the tediousness of the affairs of Church and State. He was conspicuously happy as the centre of this large family circle of sisters and nieces, with its outer ring of brothers-in-law and nephews: and of nephews and nieces-in-law too, for it sometimes seemed as if the arrangement of marriages for his sisters' children was

his only pre-occupation. The weddings of his nieces always took place in the palazzo S. Pietro, and the Pope never wearied of the enjoyment of discussing and supervising all the details of the ceremonies and of the banquets on these occasions, and he would have been really provoked if he had been left out of the endless conferences on the matters of silks and satins, velvets and jewels which are among the inevitabilities at these times. I have the memory of him moving about with his great bulk and inadequate legs among shining splendours thrown over chairs and tables, or displayed on the person for his inspection: he had real taste and knowledge in all such matters and one could not but realise the benignity of it. Yet the benignity was only a husk. When the widow of his brother came back to Rome from Florence with the confident memory of her royal reception there as a bride, the Pope had demanded from her all the jewels which he and the lord Giuliano had given her, and the lady Filiberta making protest, he became menacing with talk of excommunication. I found this tale extraordinary, but the lady Clarice only laughed at me, saying that she did not suppose any of the jewels were paid for: the great sapphire she knew of a certainty was not.

And presently the Medici needed jewels again, for there was to be another French marriage. The lady Alfonsina had always quoted one of the holy Fathers of the Church, San Geronimo, as having said that love comes with the dowry, and, failing to secure the fortune of the daughter of the lord Gonsalvo da Cordova for the lord Lorenzo her son, she was ambitious to marry him to the heiress of the Count de la Tour d'Auvergne and the princess Caterina of Bourbon. Messer Francesco Vettori, the Florentine ambassador in France, had long been occupied with the affair. King Francis had been obdurate about giving his cousin to the lord Lorenzo, saying that he was only a tradesman, but the death of the emperor Maximilian made the king one of the candidates for election to the imperial crown, and he was anxious to have the support of the Pope. Thus it came about that we soon heard that the lady Maddelena, with her heritage of the country of the were-wolf in the forests and of the black Virgins in the churches, was to be sacrificed. I write of it in that way because the Cardinal da Bibbiena, who was at the French court just then, as the Pope's Legate, related that he had felt indignation whenever he beheld this fair girl in all the glory of her youth and gaiety.

The lord Lorenzo set out for Amboise on the river Loire early in the year of our Lord 1518. He was accompanied by his brother-in-law the



lord Filippo Strozzi, whom some would have it was his evil genius; and they went with such a show of royal state that, as the lord Filippo wrote, the French court had been manifestly impressed against its will. Up to the last moment Raffaello Sanzi and his pupils had been busied on pictures of a Holy Family and of the Archangel San Michele, destined for the king of France, and the lord Lorenzo took with him too a nuptial bed of tortoiseshell and ivory encrusted with jewels that was one of the gifts of his Holiness. The marriage took place in the month of April. The duke and duchess of Urbino (and it sounded strangely to me to hear them so-called) reached Florence in September, and the lady Clarice went there to welcome her brother's bride. She said on her return to Rome that Florence had displayed all its wonted exuberance, and that the palazzo Medici itself had looked very regal, being hung both inside and out with some tapestries woven with gold thread which were the gift of the Cardinal Giulio, while the streets all round the palazzo and the courtyard had been covered in with rich silks, and here feasting had gone on for a whole week. The bride, she told me, was already with child. For the house of Medici this particular news was of the first importance, and I wondered somewhat at the lack of vivacity in any conversation I heard about it. Then from my husband I learned that the lord Lorenzo had long been suffering from what was given forth to be the spleen, and that the physicians were now in grave anxiety about the lady Maddelena herself. There could be no question about their coming to Rome for both were far too ill, and all that winter I sat and stitched at the broidery of a rich robe for a child whom I felt might never be born into this world alive: and better so I would think.

It was my talent with my needle, and my perfect amiability in employing it, which had recommended me in the first instance to the lady Clarice, who had all the Medici appreciation of beauty in any of its forms; and once I had established this footing in her life it was not difficult to be in her company on many pertinent occasions. In her somewhat anomalous position it flattered her to have in attendance (and I was careful to adopt and maintain this attitude) one who had been a lady-in-waiting at a court so renowned as that of Urbino. She climbed the stairs—an unusual excursion for her—on a morning late in April to tell me that the robe would be needed after all, for a courier had just arrived from Florence with the tidings that the lady Maddelena had given birth to a healthy daughter on the 13th day of April (1519). The lady Clarice thought it very likely that the Cardinal Giulio would start for Florence at once, for it was said that the lord Lorenzo could not live much

longer: so, after I had added some last stitches to it, we took the white satin robe with us to the palazzo Medici that afternoon and there we found a gathering in the sala of the Cibo, his Holiness seated and undoubtedly in the worst of spirits, and the Cardinal Giulio listening with scarcely concealed impatience to a spate of conjecture. The Cardinal had sensitive features, a skin that flushed easily and a nervous manner, but I thought I was aware of more assurance than usual in his bearing. He and the lady Clarice had little liking for one another; his ability was of the intelligence only, and she was candid in her arrogance. It was one of the dolours that the lady Alfonsina, who was able to dominate occasions such as these and often had a bracing effect on his Holiness, was herself ill in the villa of Careggi close to Florence where she had gone to be near her son and his wife in their sickness, and where she died shortly after they did: for the lord Lorenzo was dead two days before the Cardinal Giulio reached Florence, and he found that the lady Maddelena was deceased in the previous week. He came back to Rome in October bringing with him the child, who had been baptised 3 days after her birth by the name of Caterina Maria.

It was the decision of his Holiness that his great-niece should be lodged near to himself under the care of the lady Lucrezia in the palazzo Salviati in the Borgo. But he decreed that the infant duchess of Urbino should be brought to S. Pietro in the first instance, and on arrival she was carried in her nurse's arms from the litter to the threshold of the great throne room where the Pope and a bevy of Cardinals and of the chief officers of the papal court awaited her. Here the nurse, who was plainly greatly fatigued with the journey, relinquished her to the lady Clarice. The child was awake and full of liveliness, and as her aunt held her for inspection she looked up into the Pope's face with prominent eyes just like his own. The comment ran round the circle that here was a true Medici. His Holiness was somewhat affected, but could not refrain from one of his learned jests—*Secum fert ærumnas Danaüm*.

The occasion had its particular importance for me because it gave me one of my rare glimpses of my son and discovered him very unexpectedly to me. Ippolito was now nine years old, and he had been brought up without companions of his own age in a palazzo where he heard twenty languages and through which all the winds of the civilised world blew. The papal court was of necessity a hotbed for the intelligence, and if I had kept my own native wit sufficiently sharpened, I should have apprehended, long before this, the effect of such an

atmosphere on a child's sensibility. The slim figure in black velvet standing on the right hand of his Holiness told its own story, for Ippolito's eyes were blazing with resentment. I beheld that he was completely aware who he was, that he cherished already dreams of glory and pride, and that he realised in this infant possible inhibition. The maturity of it startled and confused me.

My husband thought the occasion unduly emphasised. As a Florentine, he declared that the state and city would never suffer a woman's prerogative, and that as Urbino itself had been annexed to the dominions of the Church, he saw no importance in the child Caterina at all. Meanwhile, he said, there were reports that the Cardinal Giulio had wrought a miracle. The Pope had appointed him Legate for all Tuscany after the death of the lord Lorenzo, and, when he rode out of Florence recently, he had left a perfectly contented population behind him. I said, I remember, to this, that I was latterly of the opinion that the ability of the Cardinal had always been under-estimated, and that, although I should never have respect for him, I thought his acumen indisputable. My husband called me a wiseacre and pinched my cheek, and then he told me that in his boyhood in Florence the Cardinal's mother had been pointed out to him by an irreverent elder brother, and that he had been moreover with his father in the Duomo on the morning of the murder of her Medici lover; but that he had seen nought of the scuffle, being at the back of the crowd around the altar, and his father pulling him by the hand outside to the piazza directly he realised that knives were drawn.

To know that which one wills to be is the hinge of all human life, and I had mental breathlessness for the revelation of the boy Ippolito, prepared, before he had reached a first decade, to grasp at that which would some day need all the power of swift and splendid conduct, and the gifts of capacity adjusted to opportunity and of intelligence to practice. As I went about my household tasks, my inward vision of my son was of an arrow, lain against a drawn bow waiting for a swift launching; and, sometimes at night-time, when I looked out on the procession of the stars in the violet heaven over Rome, I asked myself if it mattered whither the arrow should travel, so that it fly fast and feel the air shake with the song of its own passing.

More than a year went by before I saw Ippolito again, and that notwithstanding every available artifice. The lady Clarice was often to the palazzo Salviati over the river, and I often with her. The child Caterina

was sharing a nursery there with the son of the lord Giovanni de' Medici and the lady Maria Salviati, born in the same year as herself; the father leading a soldier's existence and the mother being housed with her parents. The welfare of the duchessina was largely in the lady Maria's hands, and she was of an exemplary goodness, but the command of his Holiness to have Caterina carried to him daily when he was in Rome, and his oblivion of the existence of her own son Cosimo, was, I believed, a quiet grievance. I longed to know if Ippolito ever came together with his infant cousin in the palazzo S. Pietro, and if his bearing and behaviour as regards her were still ridiculous, and then one day the opportunity to make discovery for myself was given to me.

My needle was forever called into requisition, and it happening that I had misgiving over the size of a cap I was embroidering for the heiress of the Medici, and being called down from our eyrie to walk with the lady Clarice to the palazzo Salviati, I took it with me in my hand. We found the duchessina was not returned from S. Pietro, and the lady Clarice had on a sudden the caprice to seek her out there. It was dusk as we trod the endless stairways and chambers of the papal dwelling and, formalities accomplished, found ourselves presently at a door which opened, like the shutter of a peep-show, on the unanticipated and a felicity which brought unfamiliar tears to my eyes. This was the private closet, and Pope Leo, with all his amplitude accentuated by a scarlet cassock,<sup>21</sup> was sitting at a table set out with tall candles. They lighted up the face and hands of himself and Cardinal Cesarino who was opposite to him, and discovered the cards which lay between them. These two were engaged in playing at *primiera*<sup>22</sup>—I realised that at once, for I had heard contempt expressed for the endless hours his Holiness frittered away on the game. But, as I caught sight of the absorbed faces, I said to myself that it might be somewhat senile perhaps, but it meant content: here was pure content. And on the floor beyond was even intenser happiness: pine logs on the marble hearth were thrusting up tongues of flame and fragrant smoke, and squatted on a spreading bearskin in front of them, a plump child was using legs and arms to express her inarticulate joy. A silver foot-bath, which I realised must have been brought from the bedchamber beyond, stood beside her on the floor, and Ippolito, lying on his stomach, was steering a fleet of paper boats with his breath over the surface of the water in it. We had arrived at the kernel of this great palazzo to find quiet bliss.

The Pope smiled as he listened to the explanation of his niece, but he did not disturb himself further on our entrance. Ippolito, however, got

on to his feet and made his obeisance, and he stood watching, with legs apart and arms akimbo, as I fitted the fragile cap on to Caterina's head. I thought the duchessina's hair poor in quality, and the unfortunate likeness to his Holiness still pronounced. But she was far too young to make any verdict on her looks valid. Her aunt took her presently from the floor and sat with her on an adjacent stool, but screams of protest were at once so piercing that the card-players looked round with annoyance, and it was necessary to replace her on the bearskin, when it was evident that she would not be thoroughly placated until Ippolito resumed their interrupted pastime. The lady Clarice, whose temper had been somewhat stirred, spoke ungraciously to him, and I saw the blood rising under his skin and his eyes darken as he knelt beside the basin and began to push the paper barques about with his finger. I realised in that moment how precarious was his standing in this family of the Medici supposing that the life of his Holiness was not prolonged, and, for the first time completely, the great modification which the death of the Cardinal da Bibbiena, and the recent departure of the Monsignori Bembo and Sadoletto from Rome, must make in his daily life. Because of all that I was enduring a greater poverty of existence myself, for, with the death of Raffaello Sanzi as well, I was now deprived of an audience. They, together with the lord Baldassare Castiglione, had represented Urbino and the approbation of its tradition, and I felt that a curtain had fallen leaving me to finish the play on the bare boards behind it. But I must now, and once again, go back a little in time.

I think that every woman he smiled at (and mayhap many a one at whom he did not) was romantically interested in Bernardo Dovitzi, the Cardinal da Bibbiena. He was of a tradesman's family in Bibbiena, and had obtained a post in the counting house of the Medici in Florence. When he attained to seventeen years of age Lorenzo Il Magnifico had made him one of his private secretaries, and, later on, had put the financial affairs of his son, the boy-Cardinal Giovanni, into his hands. He was ten years older than his Holiness, but was of the company of those who are ageless, and, although not of noble birth, forever left the impression that he had embarked at Paradise. He must have given wise study to the cultivation of that delicate plant pleasure too, for his insouciant practice of Epicureanism never marred the tenderness of his nature. He had deep affections, and he had loved the lord Giuliano, while none could fail to recognise that his friend's son was to him as his

own; but the trenchant friendship of his life was without doubt for Monsignor Sadoletto so distinguished from him in aspiration and conduct. If he ever loved a woman with reverent passion she is to me unknown, but his gallantries were an adage, and for the edification of all, his courtship of madonna Alda Boiarda of the court of Mantua being, for instance, a matter of jest not only with himself but with the world at large. His success with older women too was proverbial; it was a subject of much laughter in Rome that, when he returned from his mission to the court of France, it was with the spoils of the bishopric of Constance which the duchess of Angoulême had acquired for him. But I understood that this was his solitary success as ambassador, for with all his talents he was not able to persuade king Francis to the desires of his Holiness regarding a crusade against the Turk.

One had only to be with frequency in the streets of Rome if one required the consciousness of what of moment was stirring in the world; and rumour of this crusade against the infidel to which Pope Leo was trying to persuade all the powers of Europe awoke no interest in me until the day I beheld his Holiness with head uncovered, with naked feet and with every symptom of religious sensibility, walking in procession to S. Maria Sopra Minerva. Religious processions were innumerable in Rome, so that one ceased to be very mindful of them, but I became aware of something especial on this occasion for all the shops and banks were closed for 3 days, altars were set up everywhere, and tapestries and brocades were displayed from all the windows. There was a map on the wall of the counting house of the Strozzi bank, and my husband made me consider it, saying that maps brought conviction in a way nothing else could. And indeed I was astonished when I saw the extent of the dominion of the sultan Selim and how narrow was the sea which lay between Italy and the shores over which he held sway. In the eight years of his reign he had conquered Kurdistan, Syria and Egypt, and had advanced his frontier in Europe into Hungary. It was his affirmation that there was but one God and that there could be but one emperor, and it was known that he desired that emperor to be himself and to make the Rome of the Cæsars his capital. I might think his pretensions fantastic, said my husband, but he had a fleet of 300 tiremes, and that far out-numbered the combined navies of Europe; he had, moreover, in his janissaries the finest infantry in the world and boundless wealth was at his disposal. They were saying in France and in the states of Germany that the project to take the offensive against him—to raise the Cross once more against the Crescent—was only another device to

exalt the Medici and to fill their coffers; but the danger to Christendom was nevertheless a real one. I could not but smile at my husband's impiety when he said that if God Almighty had perception of what was droll the crusade was already doomed to failure, because that He would never use as the instrument of His glory the singular figure we had seen in the intercessory procession that day. And, in the event, nothing came of the efforts to rouse Europe. Cardinal-legates were sent to every court, but unanimity among the kings proved to be a vain dream; and then the sultan Selim died in Greece of the malady of cancer, his son Suleyman was rumoured to be of pacific temper, and the Pope's efforts were laid aside because of the immediate danger of the election of king Charles of Spain and of Naples and Sicily as emperor in succession to his grandfather the emperor Maximilian of Germany.

It was the accustomed raising of banners and the surge of humanity around them which demonstrated at length to Rome that the new emperor had been chosen by the electors in the German town of Frankfort and that, notwithstanding the Pope, the choice had fallen on king Charles of Spain. It was in the early morning that the sound of distant music came in through the opened windows, and the servant whom my husband dispatched came back with the intelligence that all the Spaniards in Rome were in the streets and that the cry *The Empire and Spain* was to be heard everywhere. It was decided to close and barricade the bank for the day, and later we went forth to the Borgo where there was a multitude in front of the palazzo of Don Luis Carroz the Spanish envoy, and we walked into the piazza of San Pietro wondering if there would be demonstration there; but it was not thronged at all, and there was no sign of life in the windows which overlooked it. The great heat of noon drove us homewards, but towards evening news came of the serenading of the Spanish Cardinals, and of much illumination and merry doings, and my husband went forth again. I put up the bar of the door on to the stair when he left, for the Strozzi servitors were either to bed overhead, or, as was more likely, in the streets: and it was with a complete lapse of the caution which had bade me do it, that, when about midnight, I heard a summons on the door, I took down the bar instantly, and opened to discover a figure cloaked and masked which was certainly not that of my husband. The visitor stepped over the threshold before I could summon words, and unmasking, revealed himself to be Monsignor Bembo—and not the lord Filippo Strozzi as in the first instant I had greatly feared. Pietro Bembo realised my first alarm,

my relief, and then my hesitation: for the hour was late, and my husband, notwithstanding a friendship which had grown between them, never remained unconscious of Mgr Pietro's reputation for gallantry. Awkwardness was however not a possibility, and I led the way to the chamber within and went to find wine, bringing it presently with water, on a silver dish.

Pietro Bembo took a stool beside it and the two candles on the farther side of the table, while I mounted the dais of the window alcove and sat on the stone bench there with the night behind me. It was thus my husband found us when he came in later on through the open staircase door, and if he was not pleased I did not encourage him to betray it. For myself I had found stimulation for an hour, as I ever did, in the conversation of one who lived in the atmosphere of world events, and Mgr Bembo had been trying to put before me the cogency of the resistance of the Medici to a Hapsburg emperor; because I had argued to him that the election had not given Charles of Hapsburg anything but a barren distinction. I knew perfectly that, to the kingdoms of Spain and Naples which he had inherited through his mother Joanna of Castile and Aragon, was now added that great dominion of his grandfather Maximilian which stretched from the Alps to the North Sea, and from the Rhine to the frontiers of Poland and Hungary; but his sway over this vast territory would have remained unaltered whatever the decision of the electors, and his Holiness, I said, must by this time be habituated to the fact that the frontier of king Charles' realm of Naples was but forty miles from Rome. Pietro Bembo replied to me that my logic was admirable, but that none of it was a matter for logic at all, and no formula would help. The Roman empire of old had forced the nations to own a common sway, and the mere word empire had preserved in a transcendental way the feeling of a sublime unity, of a brotherhood of mankind. The material side of the splendours of the past had gone, he said, but what was left was a sense of exaltation. It was this exaltation, so incapable of expression, which the Papacy feared. For was not the Papacy itself in a sense above explanation—relying not on reason nor on sight, nor in the least on faith, but on an exhausted emotion?<sup>23</sup>

In Rome, at that time, it was possible to say nearly everything without mishap to oneself, but I thought it as well that my husband did not join us until after this had been expressed. On his arrival Mgr Bembo related laughingly how king Charles, not yet twenty years of age, had surrounded Frankfort with his troops in order, it was announced, to secure the impartiality of the election. He went on to say that what he



himself deplored most in the tangled affair was the failure of the embassy of Cardinal da Bibbiena, and that he wondered how it would go with him when he returned from France. His Holiness' undeviating desire, behind all the shifting façade of his policy, had been to secure an unimportant election such as that of the elector of Saxony or in the last resort that of the king of England, and to this end it was imperative to persuade king Francis to withdraw himself as a candidate and to support the papal proposition. Was it not vanity, Pietro Bembo asked, to suppose that an ambitious young monarch would allow himself to be used in this way? The Cardinal Giulio de' Medici had long been working for that prevailing position in the counsels of his Holiness which had from the first belonged to Monsignor Santa Maria in Portico (Cardinal da Bibbiena), and this failure to prevail with the king of France, either in the matter of the crusade or the election, might not be without results.

We were unwitting chatterers. The Cardinal da Bibbiena came back from France in ill-health, and in the month of November all Rome was in the streets to see the Holy Father ride across the city for the hunt at Palo. My husband confessed that he had not resisted the temptation to sally from his desk to be a gaper in the crowd, and that on his white Arab horse, in his white vest and jackboots, Pope Leo was not unsightly, for in the saddle the disproportion between the bulk of his body and the length of his legs was lost. On his right hand rode the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici in a scarlet jacket and a Spanish cap of black velvet, and on his left, in a glowing green jerkin, his nephew Ippolito was astride a lively mule which the boy, I was told, handled with a haughty ease. A very great company followed in the train—all the faction of the Orsini said my informer—and he had recognised the Pope's nephews the Cardinals Cibo, Salviati and Ridolfi, and some of the Rangone family, the Portuguese Ambassador, and the poets messire Tebaldeo and Molza. They were a clattering throng and armed with every imaginable weapon, from spears and javelins and bows and arrows to swords and shields. I asked if Mgr Bembo was among them, and had the answer that he was not, for a clerk from San Pietro who had been in the bank before noon had told that the Cardinal da Bibbiena was lying very ill and that Mgr Bembo was at his bedside. Five days later death came to the Cardinal as he lay in the bed with the apricot brocade hangings and the probability that it was the result of poison was freely discussed in Rome. But in this, I understand, rumour did the Cardinal de' Medici a wrong, and that the subsequent determination of Monsignor Sadoletto to leave the

service of his Holiness and to go to his bishopric in France was only putting into action that which had long existed as a great desire.

The Pope's gift to Mgr Jacopo Sadoletto of the bishopric of Carpentras in Provence had been meant as a means of enrichment only, for his Excellency had always overlooked the opportunities of his position and was too poorly provided for. He and Mgr Bembo had long been promoted to be private secretaries and domestic prelates<sup>24</sup> to his Holiness with a staff of minor secretaries under them. They owed their position to their great ability as latinists, for Pope Leo was ambitious that only scholarly Latin, flowing and elegant, should be used in his more important correspondence. Both secretaries were famed for their pure Ciceronian style, but that of Monsignor Sadoletto had the greater rhythm and he was the profounder scholar of the two. He seemed perhaps too serious in temperament, too rare in mind, and too holy of life to be a substantial figure in the gorgeous court and among the prismatic splendours of the churches of Rome; but sometimes to me it was the splendours that seemed wraithlike, and what he represented alone reality. The life of this city, growing every day more magnificent in the hands of great artists and craftsmen, would reveal itself suddenly as having its roots in a will which had no dominant idea, which was without faithfulness, disunited within itself: a will to be dreaded, because disharmony was an unrighteousness, and we secretly fear unrighteousness. In the deeps of our nature is the need for the satisfaction of unity with the Will which is above the will of the world—if we might but stand in its Shining Presence. And then was the realisation that Monsignor Sadoletto did; that he—and there were others too—lived another life, had attained in some way to the end of being, and knew a happiness which was passionate in its purity among felicities which were fugitive because they had no power to fire the spirit.

My husband, discreetly loquacious to me about the orgy after the nuptials of messer Agostino Chigi<sup>25</sup> (which the lord Filippo Strozzi, who had stayed on after the formal banquet, had described to him), said, with his inimitable shrug, that he supposed Rome only escaped the fate of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the existence of the Oratory of Divine Love. I was never able to learn more about this fellowship than that it met frequently, at a very early hour, in the small church of S. Dorotea beyond the Settimiana gate of the Borgia Pope, and for a Mass when the pledge of our glory was received by all those kneeling

in the dawn. My husband said that Mgr Sadoletto had always belonged to it, and that he believed it to have been founded by Gaetano Cajetan when he was pro-notary to Pope Julius. It was something that was in the midst of Rome: and Rome committed the sin of insensitiveness to it. Yet whenever I looked into the face of Jacopo Sadoletto I seemed to be listening, preternaturally, to trumpets sounding very, very far away before the coming of a great procession.

He did not live in the palazzo S. Pietro but at a distance from it in a modest villa on the hill of the Quirinale; and once he asked us there to supper with him, saying that the Cardinal della Valla, whose consuming interest was in the archæology of the city, desired to know my husband. It was a fair afternoon as our mules climbed the via della Dataria between the vineyards, and we found supper laid in a little loggia which looked on to a tended garden where the surface of a pool gleamed gold from a floating carpet of water-lilies: and immediately I saw the garden as a happy place, knowing its own sun and having a starlight of its own. The supper to which we sat down was a simple one of crisp cakes, salad and pickles, roast pigeons, and with curds to follow: but the dishes were of the maiolica of Gubbio, dark blue and ruby and golden yellow lustre, the gift of the lord Baldassare, and I was entranced with the honey-coloured glasses powdered with gold and on tall fragile stems which his Excellency said Mgr Pietro Bembo had brought from Venice for him, maintaining that those he had formerly in use were far too small. One thought that of necessity, said the Cardinal della Valla, when it was wine of Malvasy which was poured into them—and I liked him the better for saying it, because the wine was not really excellent: the better—it is not my meaning that I liked him much. We should not have been human if gossip about a court from which we were excluded was not of interest to us, but my husband was of my own mind that our host's reluctance to speak of the master who employed him should have been respected. However the sallow Cardinal, in the black cassock with red buttons which he had considered a sufficient attire for the occasion, had a candour that was not æsthetic, and we were soon abruptly acquainted with the dissatisfaction among the foreign ambassadors who found it hard of late to obtain an audience; and with the more open resentment of those commissioned to deal with religious vagrancy in northern Germany when their difficulties were treated by his Holiness as of fugitive importance. Monsignor Sadoletto made answer with smiling humour that, perchance, his Holiness, as a philosopher, recalled the story of Menippus which messer Desiderius Erasmus had related in his *Moria*:

how that Menippus, looking down from the moon on the innumerable rufflings of mankind, saw them only as a swarm of flies and gnats, quarrelling among themselves, fighting, laying traps for one another, snatching, playing, wantoning, growing up, falling and dying: how that it is not to be believed what broils this little creature raiseth, and yet in how short a time it comes to nothing. But the mention of the *Moria* only supplied the Cardinal with fuel for his argument that Pope Leo's good-humour and beneficence and benevolence were a mask for his indifferentism. He recalled that, when the book came to the palazzo S. Pietro as a gift from its author, his Holiness commanded a reading after supper, and none louder than he in laughter, although the satire flung at Popes was especially bitter: he had hilariously fastened on the phrase that *to pray is a sign that one has nothing better to do*, as an encouragement to prolong the subsequent concert until the hours of early morning. Monsignor Sadoletto said sadly that the papacy of Giovanni de' Medici had been no doubt in many ways a disappointment to his friends, but that he himself often felt that the lack of tensity, which was becoming more apparent of late, was really due to bodily infirmity, and that his Holiness was a suffering man. His Eminence della Valla answered dryly to this that the Pope was never too ailing to leave Rome to engage in sport for weeks, or even for months, at a time:—Yet this relaxation was not completely godless, his Excellency Sadoletto intervened gently, for, as the Cardinal knew, there was no morning in the year's round when his Holiness did not hear Mass; that he would often say it himself, and, when he did so, he never neglected Confession beforehand. The Cardinal allowed piety—but what San Pietro would make of it all some day he could but wonder! My husband had thought it well to take no part in this interchange, but at the mention of San Pietro, he was able to interrupt with some statement about the foundations of the new basilica, and we all rose shortly and went within to a room lined with books, where our host, pushing aside a globe and some papers of his own, invited the two archæological apostates to a table, then with a smile at the heads bent over maps and plans, he led me presently outside again and down some steps laid with mosaic on to the gravel between his parterres.

We sat on a curved seat in an alcove of clipped box which faintly scented all the air, and as the garden melted slowly to bronze, and the magnolia buds lay sleeping dimly against their leaves, I was content that I had chosen for wear a dress of cinnamon colour striped with woven silver thread that seemed just in the spirit of this disembodied hour.

We talked a little of old days in Urbino, and then in a silence that fell I turned to find his Excellency watching my countenance. He said simply, as I stirred under his gaze, that I had a face which for ever asked an immortal question; and I caught my breath as the longing swept over me in a flood to respond to his grave loving-kindness. The moment hung between us—and then, I think, as much to his relief as to mine own, it was gone: for an attempt to reach another human soul must forever fail. Moreover I ask myself if there was a woman there to reach: women of good sense (and was I not beyond all things sensible) get the better part of their dying done in their lifetime. I summoned gaiety to ask him if he would consider questioning about the monk Luther, who had been mentioned at supper, belonged to the mortal or the immortal framework of things; and he answered, as lightly, that the monk's doings certainly bid fair to be a topic immortal in its tediousness. But presently—for he recognised that my curiosity was not frivolous—he told me, with the economy of words that was characteristic of him, how the matter seemed to him to lie.

He would have me to acknowledge the majesty of Holy Church, and to have a reverence for the shadow of the great White Throne set up here on earth, and to realise what the world of Europe would be to-day if the controlling power of righteousness that was the Papacy had never come to flower in its midst. He caught the riggish look I fear I gave him, but he pursued evenly that the perpetual strain of the greatest of vocations had needed more concentration than every Pope could summon to it, and the tares that had grown in the wheat had long been calamity, and for over a hundred years now a tide of anger had ever been swelling, especially in the northern kingdoms where exactions had been carried out by the wrong people in the wrong way. It was unjust to suppose the Church blind either to the abuses which abounded or to the dissatisfaction of good men. Even a century ago the Council of Constance was concerned with it all, and subsequently there had been Councils at Siena, Pavia and Basel dealing with these matters, while, from the time of Pope Martin V onwards, reformatory decrees had constantly been issued which acknowledged the evils. In the year of his death Pope Julius had set up the 5th Council of the Lateran, and that had sat on for 5 years under Pope Leo: true it was that it had been dissolved without real accomplishment to its credit, yet the ground had been prepared for another Council in God's good time, and the patience of the faithful would one day know its reward.

I said experimentally to Monsignor at this that I supposed the mis-

chief to be that, beyond the Alps, were those who were neither faithful nor patient, and he returned that my intelligence walked with his own, and he believed that it was despair at obtaining relief in any other way that had led to the attack on dogma itself: circumstances had not yet combined to enforce the needed reforms in discipline and morals, so discontent, being hopeless, had fermented here and there in the form of theological heresies, especially in such universities as Paris and Erfurt; and now the ferment had thrown up this somewhat boisterous Martin Luther as a nuncio of dissatisfaction. At first he had been enmeshed in his own thesis, and had floundered; but he was not without skill, and he had freed himself at last from ambiguity by the simplicity of the desperate demand for a change of method. The need of the people for Christ, in Whom all things earthly and heavenly are comprehended, was not to be denied, but the method of Holy Church was to be discarded as an attempted escape from judgment and an actual escape from grace: the Mass was to be abolished and the Word was to be spoken: to be preached.

I was puzzled, and murmured that there had always been preachers of the Gospel, and Monsignor Sadoletto answered me that he was failing to be expository he knew, and he often longed for the theologian's heaven in which problems shall engage the mind not to darken and vex it but to be understood. Theology—the structure of ideas—was, he said, always liable to get itself entangled in the web of the Church's ritual conceptions. These had been inherited in some measure from the sacred ceremonial of the Jews: how could that be otherwise: and the old ritual and the new were alike methods of manifestation to the people, who came together expectant. At the glowing core of Christian theology were the words of the holy Apostle S. Giovanni. And then, with a cadence which has always been a memory, he quoted to me, first in the Greek, then in the Latin, and last in the vernacular, *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory*. The final aim of the Church must be he said the showing forth of this Divine Hypostasis, and the problem of the Church had been how to accomplish this in the full measure of its meaning and power and metaphysical magnificence, and yet in a manner so simple that it should be eternally evident and forever well-ordered. The solution had been the Host, raised above the bowed head of theologian and peasant alike, symbol of all the vast implication of the Incarnation, pledge of the deification of man—of the taking up of manhood into God, as San Atanasius had expressed it. *Intra illum nec inclusam*: there was undoubtedly both that which was sacramental

and that which was manifest in moral personalities: Jacopo Sadoletto fell into a brooding silence, rousing himself only to say that neither of us would live long enough to see the outcome of it all, but he presaged a great vacuum, for the new method exposed itself to betrayal and mutilation when transferred to the realm of action with all its chances and insufficiencies.

I only saw Monsignor Sadoletto once again after this not-to-be-forgotten evening, and that was in the basilica of San Pietro. For the crazy reason that the church was annexed to the papal palazzo I would sometimes cross the river to its piazza in the cloak and hood which did not distinguish me from a woman of the people, and with a hope that chance would be my friend. I suppose I was puerile enough to nurse a vision of gates into one of the courtyards swinging back and Ippolito emerging from between them like the prince on a prancing steed in a picture. I always entered the basilica itself by the porta Romana<sup>26</sup> to give validity to my journey, but it was never possible to pray, for behind the temporary high altar the reconstruction was dragging on (and breaking messer Sanzi's spirit so it was said) and the noise of masons' tools was continuous.<sup>27</sup> I knelt perfunctorily but had hardly done so when I recognised his Excellency Sadoletto coming from the sacristy with a young priest at his side. I rose to intercept him, and he stopped and took my hand between his own and told me that he was leaving for Provence on the morrow. I could not help my tears, and we stood silently for a few moments before he asked me to pray for him always: adding gently that he went to serve his Lord and Master in the way that had been opened for him. I longed for his blessing, but there was too much passing to and fro and confusion of sounds, and I watched him go swiftly along the nave and out of my life for ever. I came away presently and picked my footsteps among the blocks of the mosaic portico which had been taken down a few months previously. A bitter wind was blowing and snow swirled in my face.

All Lent the weather was very stormy and on Good Friday there was an earthquake which cracked the wall close to the apartments of his Holiness. It was on this day that Raffaello Sanzi died in his palazzo in the Borgo Nuovo where he had been lying ill of a fever which mystified the physicians although it seemed plain enough that it was due to taking cold when he was in wet garments. He had often seemed overwrought of late years, for the work undertaken by him for his Holiness and others needed titanic powers. I had never known him with intimacy, for even as a slim boy in Urbino I had felt that behind his obliging man-

ner was an indifference to all except his art and its prizes; and latterly he had grown fat and that repelled me. But he belonged (as I have before expressed it) to my shrunken Urbino audience, and when I learned that Pietro Bembo was to be of it no longer either, I felt desolate indeed. It was on the day after messer Sanzi's great funeral in the Rotunda that Monsignor Bembo came to tell us that his father was very unwell, that he had obtained leave to go to Venice, and that his intention was not to return to the service of his Holiness.

He had looked ill of late. Apart from the unceasing toils of his office, the amazing affair of messer Longolio<sup>28</sup> had made greater demands on his health and strength than I think anyone realised. I suddenly saw him as a much older man, but there was that in his bearing and in his eyes which conveyed the impression that for him the real adventure of life was but just beginning. It was in the forenoon that he came, and I was at my needle, with the morning sun slanting in, and the folds of the crimson silk I was embroidering lying at my feet. He seated himself on the end of a chest which was between the windows, and my husband, who had brought him upstairs, went down again to the bank—perforce, I think. I was glad of that, because, if he had waited, Pietro Bembo would not have said all that he did to me, and I should not have had what has always been to me a memorable hour.

He asked me if in old days I had realised him as consumed by his passion for the lady duchess of Ferrara;<sup>29</sup> and when I put out my hand to him impulsively as a token of my understanding, he kissed the tips of my fingers lightly, saying it was true that it had devastated life for him for many years, but its own flame had devoured it at last, and its ashes had been carried away to the winds long before the lady Lucrezia's death. (I stitched diligently and in silence, for the question in my mind could not be put into words.) Perhaps, Mgr Bembo added gently, it was a furnace that each one of us must pass through before we can take a firm stand and a steady hold on life—life which was the only object, and which he was to have at last. I looked up at this and let my hands lie idle, and he leaned forward and plucked up a skein of my silk and began to twist it in his fingers. He had never deceived himself, he said, that it is riches alone which make ideal life a possibility by providing a setting for it, because, when life loses exterior beauty, intellect and character both deteriorate. It is always the form that imposes the fact, and form and poverty know nothing of one another. Thus the important thing was riches, and men would never enquire how they were obtained so long as they existed. He had now riches in moderation. Lack of



generosity was not one of the failings of Pope Leo, and moreover there had been all the opportunities of his office. Never again, of necessity, need he be cap in hand to any man. He was of Venetia; but his future was not to be a story printed in capital letters—not as Doge of Venice did he desire to die. I would tilt my chin at him and at the confession that a villa on the riverside, outside the town of Padua, was to be for him fulfilment of ambition. He had been actually the owner of this dwelling for a year past, and it was called villa Noniana: he was to know the rapture of ranging all his books on his own shelves in his own house, and of raising under his own direction the fruit and vegetables for his own table: and under these conditions it was possible that a *magnum opus* might yet come from his pen. Here mortal estate touches the soul to encomium, I said: and Mgr Pietro looked at my arched eyebrows and laughed with hearty amusement. He wondered presently how much I divined: and I asked if it was rash to divine Morosina.

I recall to myself all that I then knew about this courtesan. I had heard that she was the daughter of the courtesan Antea, and her father said to be the lord Antonio Suriano, Venetian envoy in Rome. She had been established by her mother in the piazza Torre Sanguigna, but she had gained a reputation for lack of accomplishments, and soon her sala knew no other visitor than Monsignor Bembo. It was even said that he had married her. I had seen her, for she came one day into the shop of the Florentine Rozzone where I was turning over velvets, and he told me, after she had left again with her waiting-maid and her page, who she was. I had noted a slender throat, and grey eyes set somewhat widely apart between short black lashes, and I had heard a low voice with a husky vibration: but that was all my recollection, except of a wadded and stitched cloak of dust-coloured satin with a collar of Spanish cat which I had thought was in good taste. Now I was to hear from Monsignor Bembo that she had a sensitive intelligence; grace in thought, word, and bearing; command of all the expression of rhythmic life; mastery of the terrible challenge of a love that has at its core the radiant spirit of delight. With a growing energy of understanding, and dismissing mockery both from my countenance and my spirit, I listened to his earnest rhapsody, realising that, as the wine must taste of its own grapes, so henceforth whatever Pietro Bembo was to do or dream must include this woman; because of her he was to feel that he belonged at last to the pageant of man. Their marriage—for in no other way did he speak nor I think of it<sup>30</sup>—was to be a unity of destiny, and loyalty to that the test of all their being. He had risen to his feet, and as

he stood before me with his hands on his hips, illumined by his felicity, I had much ado to conceal how moved I was. I asked him how he would contrive to evade an inevitable summons from his Holiness to return to Rome, and he answered that he meant to make an excuse of continued ill-health,<sup>31</sup> and that no doubt in time his place would be filled—no one was ever really missed he said. I, for one, should miss him terribly, I told him, and then I laughed at him, and said I found it difficult to imagine him in his villa: that he would not be transcendent as a domestic companion, for he had lived too long among the stimulation of courts. He replied seriously that he was conscious of all his frailties, but that there were women framed to bear with life, and he believed Morosina to be of their company, and that his only desire would be to compass her happiness. I raised my forefinger in laughing admonition, and can but hope he pondered my dogmatic that the person whose affection is satisfactory to us must not only desire our happiness, but must discover in what our happiness consists. Presently we were standing, and I gave him my cheek in farewell across the pool of glowing silk on the floor between us.

It was the invective of the lady Clarice against the growing domination of the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici in the palazzo S. Pietro that kept me constantly aware of any events that might affect Ippolito, and very shortly after the evening when I had fitted the little cap of gold thread on to the head of the babe Caterina, she asked me to come to her wardrobe on a pretext of consulting me about a covering for some pillows. I found her plainly enraged, and presently I had the whole tale how that the Cardinal had sent to Florence for the bastard Alessandro, had installed him in rooms alongside those of the other bastard Ippolito, and had arranged that they were to share the instruction of messer Pierio Valeriano of Bellino.<sup>32</sup> Ippolito, she said, was treating the Mongol with a cool disdain, but Caterina had shrieked with fury when she first saw him, and had repeated the shrieks at every encounter since. I could only murmur that it was all unfortunate—indeed what had I else to say? But I contrived to ask presently with indifference if his Holiness had ever unfolded any proposals for the future of these three children: I repeating what Monsignor Sadoletto had said about the Pope's health, and observing that the position of the duchessina and of the two boys was a very ambiguous one. The lady Clarice, at the other side of the sheet of shimmering shot silk which we were holding between us, was voluble

with her disdain: when had her uncle ever betrayed what his meaning was, she ejaculated shrilly. No emperor, king, nor reigning prince had ever succeeded in making him put his cards upon the table, and was it possible that the women of his own family should succeed better. She herself foresaw the future clearly, and was not the only person convinced that the Cardinal Giulio would succeed as another Medici Pope, for he was now much the richest of the Cardinals. His own son would be installed in Florence, Caterina would be held as a useful pawn in the European game, and as for Ippolito—and here she tugged at the silk so that it came out of my hands—as for Ippolito, he was very well designed by nature to look after himself: the Pope indulged him to folly, the Cardinals vied with one another in giving him pleasure, every underling in the palazzo paid court to him, and, already, every woman who saw him tried to engage his attention. I had stooped to the floor to recover the edge of the silk, so that it was over my head that the lady Clarice concluded, laughing a little, perhaps at herself. She said she was only wasting her breath, for his Holiness, after all, was not yet fifty years of age, she disbelieved all the legends about his health, and he himself certainly meant to live for ever—had he not just plunged into another war.

It was not at all easy for me, during the spring and summer of the year of our Lord 1521, to be clear about what was happening in the world, for my husband was too unwell to be abroad, and suffered at times great pain for which the physician could do nothing. He himself missed very much the news of men and affairs which he was accustomed to glean in the bank, and I was often beset how to make a diversion for him. Then I heard—and I felt it to be ill-chance that I had not heard it earlier—that the lord Baldassare Castiglione had been for some time past in Rome on an embassy from the marquis of Mantua, to whose service he had now returned, and that the Pope, who had always had an affection for him, had lent him the summer pavilion of Belvedere for a residence. He had married since we had seen him last, and during this absence from home his wife had died in giving birth to their third child.<sup>33</sup> I took up a pen and sought with fitting words to express sympathy for his loss, writing also of my husband's illness: and two days afterwards he sent to learn if he might come to us after supper.

He was in deep mourning and he looked worn and sad. He thanked me for my understanding letter saying that no greater sorrow could have befallen him, and that what he felt most bitterly was that he should have been away at the time of his dear wife's cruel death. But he passed

from his own affairs at once to my own, and presently I took him to my husband's bedside. And after this he came frequently, always with the same lack of ceremony, and with the quiet talk which was a godsend in the long, hot days. I valued his visits the more that they were, in some measure, protection for myself. I had sometimes realised that, should my husband die, I was at the mercy of the Strozzi family, and that in this city of Rome no one was ever sick without rumour that poison might account for it. The lord Baldassare had always had an unaffected puissance and prestige which I find it hard to define. I took care that the lady Clarice should realise his friendship for me.

It was knowledge my husband had of the loans his Holiness was raising with the Bini bank which led to the discussion of the war against the king of France in Lombardy. My husband told the lord Baldassare that part of the agreement was that the Bini were authorised to sell offices of the Papal Curia as they became vacant, half of the proceeds, up to 39,000 ducats, to go to themselves. The lord Baldassare only shook his head silently. My husband then asked him what was the need of this sudden onslaught on the French, and he answered that it was forever difficult to disentangle the Pope's motives. He said that his Holiness often took exercise in the cooler evenings in the gardens of S. Pietro, riding a black mule with his nephew, Ippolito, beside him on another, and that after watching the wild animals fed, they would not seldom dismount at Belvedere and sit awhile in the balcony looking down on the children at their games in the meadows, and at the view towards the castello Pratidi with Soracte beyond. He said that he had now known Giovanni de' Medici for over 20 years, and believed he knew him better than most men, but he could never draw a direct statement of opinion from him—that secretiveness had become a disease, and that these opportunities had proved perversely sterile. I was sitting on the other side of the bed busy with the embroidery of a linen shift, and it was in response to my prompting that the lord Baldassare gave his own summary of the events that had led to war—a summary of surmise only, he declared it to be. I record what he said as nearly as I recollect it.

Even before the election of Charles V as emperor, the Pope had apprehended an approaching struggle for domination between the two great powers of Europe, and that they would make Italy their battleground. He convinced himself, as his predecessors had done, that only by the increase of the States of the Church lying between their territories could he put an end to this position, and that it was imperative for him to add the duchy of Ferrara to his territories of Florence,

Urbino, and the Marches. The dangerous obstacle to this was that France and Venice, as natural enemies of the papal ambitions, might both come to the aid of duke Alfonso of Ferrara: and it was a great triumph of diplomacy when the Pope contrived the consent of king Francis to a secret treaty in which the king was pledged to defend the Papal States against rebellious vassals. The lord Baldassare was sure of the existence of this treaty, he said, and very likely the emperor knew of it too, and he had sent a very astute gentleman of Castile, don Juan Manuel, to Rome as his envoy. The whole situation had been obscure, but it was plain that the Pope had now discarded the king of France, and had made the bold, if rash, resolve to drive the French out of Italy. He had probably discovered that in no event would the king give up his patronage of the duke Alfonso; then there had been a French claim to the guardianship of the little duchess Caterina which had been much resented; moreover there were complaints that came forever from Milan itself, of French encroachments on the rights of the Church; finally there had been exacting demands about the appointment of new Cardinals. All this had been matter for indignation, but the lord Baldassare expressed his certainty that his Holiness had been finally moved to seek the alternative of an alliance with the emperor because he was at length convinced that the improprieties of the monk Luther in Germany were a danger to the honour and authority of the Holy See, and without imperial countenance it would be difficult to deal with the matter. Meanwhile king Francis had tried to seize Navarre and had fomented an insurrection in the Netherlands. The outcome of it all was that the Pope and emperor were now united in an alliance to purify Christendom from error and to establish universal peace: there had been a badly managed bonfire of Luther's writings in the piazza Navona, an attack was to be made on Genoa by the papal and imperial ships, and the allied forces were to march on Milan under the lord Prospero Colonna. This was all going to cost a great deal, and his Holiness, said the lord Baldassare, often could not sleep at night-time because of his financial anxieties—he afraid too that, after all, the emperor might betray him and leave him to the mercy of the French. I remember my husband smiling as he lay on his pillows, and saying that there was a streak of the craven in all the Medici.

In October I found myself widowed for a second time. Real grief at the loss of a true and kindly companion, and my own ill-health after

so many months of fatigue and anxiety, made it impossible for me at first to have any coherence in my mind about myself. I felt nothing but an instinct against hasty projects, and the physician, messer Bartolommeo Camerto, presently spoke to the lady Clarice on my behalf. She brought the lord Filippo Strozzi with her upstairs on the following day and with much kindness and grace of manner he asked me to consider the rooms as my own until the dawn of the new year. This I realised did not give me overmuch time for decision, but as my husband had left me his worldly gear and fortune and I had what would suffice to lodge me honourably in a convent, I resolved on making that my *modus operandi* until some other way of life should open out for me. But I had hardly formed this intention, when, at dawn on the morning of the second day of December, there was a summons on my door, and the serving-man, Niccolò, stood there saying that the Pope was dead and the lady Clarice asked that I would come to her.

I found all below in confusion, and the lady Clarice too agitated for sequence of speech. All that I could comprehend was that the lord Filippo being absent, she had only just learned that his Holiness had passed away at midnight, and, with that, the intelligence that the lady Lucrezia, with her son Giacomo and their servants, had been all night in the papal apartments and had carried off everything of value that was possible in the time. The lady Clarice had formed the intention to go at once to the palazzo S. Pietro to discover what was really happening. She desired me to accompany her, and I went upstairs again for a cloak and hood against the cold of the early morning. We could hear the great bell of the Capitol tolling as we crossed the bridge. We had armed servants with us, but I did not realise at the time how dangerous it was for us to be abroad, for on a Pope's death it is ancient custom that the Senator, as a gesture of his civic authority, should send the capitoline militia to the city prisons to release the occupants; and not only this, but the trained bands of the Holy See, with their pay always in arrears, ever make the interregnum their own opportunity, and there sets in an era of brawls, waylayings, murders and ravishing; while some of the great families assert their pretensions and take over the quarters in which their palazzi stand, holding them with their armed retainers against all comers. Rome thus becomes a true pandemonium, and barricades were already being put up in the Borgo as we passed through it.

We reached the piazza of S. Pietro to find the courtyard gates open to admit the coach of a Cardinal which was just in front of us with its escort; but we ourselves were stopped by the guard, and the lady Clarice

discovered herself to be no longer the niece of the Pope. The captain of the Swiss yielded however at last to her persistence, we were allowed into the court, and one of the secretaries of Cardinal Pucci came to us. He told us that S. Pietro was now in the hands of the Cardinal Camerlengo, that his Holiness would be borne forth at noon for the lying-in-state in the basilica, and that the two boys were to await the arrival of the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, whom, I now learnt, was not in Rome. The lady Clarice did not attempt to see the boys, but decided to go to the palazzo Salviati. As we re-crossed the piazza San Pietro a restless crowd was already gathering and it bid fair to be a day of sunshine.

It was perhaps only I, in my eyrie, who, in all Rome, had been completely taken by surprise at the Pope's death. I had the story of it all that evening, and it would seem that his Holiness had been very ill in October with his old complaint, brought on by anxiety when he learned that the lord Prospero Colonna had been obliged to raise the siege of Parma. The Cardinal de' Medici had been sent as Legate to the camp, and in November Pope Leo went to Magliana to recover his health. There, in the middle of November, rode the lord Baldassare with a letter he had received from the marquis of Mantua who was in command of the Swiss mercenaries: the letter telling that the allied armies had safely crossed the river Odde. A week later Paolo d'Arrezzo, chamberlain to Cardinal de' Medici, arrived in Rome with the news that Milan had fallen, and he and messer Gian Giberti, secretary to the Cardinal, reached Magliana while the Pope was saying Lauds. The joy of his Holiness was very great, and that evening he stayed late on the loggia of the villa watching the bonfires and other diversions with which the Swiss guard were celebrating the victory in the courtyard below. He must have caught a chill, for the next day on the ride to Rome he said that he was cold, and he dismounted and walked for some way to warm himself. It amazed the lady Clarice that I should have been oblivious of his Holiness' reception in Rome and all the rejoicings, but the fact is that I did hear the bells, and the guns of San Angelo, and had even caught sight of the flare of the bonfires, but in Rome one became so accustomed to turmoil that I had hardly speculated on what it might mean.

Pope Leo returned to Rome on Monday, and on Tuesday he had fainted during an audience and was obliged to go to his bed. On the following Saturday he was better, and he sent for Ippolito, played a game of *primiera* with him, and listened to some music on viols in his

chamber. In the evening however he fainted again and horsemen were sent to summon the Cardinal Giulio from Milan. The next day (Advent Sunday) he had rallied, and heard with delight of the surrender of Parma, Piacenza and Asti. The lady Lucrezia, Giacomo Salviati, and the Cardinals Ridolfi and Pucci left him at nine o'clock, but two hours later he asked for Holy Unction and at midnight he died.





# FLORENCE



# FLORENCE

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WHETHER the Strozzi bank must go bankrupt or no was the whole pre-occupation of casa Strozzi in the days which followed the death of Pope Leo, for the bank had made his Holiness large loans, and the papal treasury was quite empty. I learnt that most of the chief banks were in the same plight, and that everything of value in the palazzo S. Pietro had been pledged as well. The lord Filippo wondered in my hearing if the Cardinal Giulio, out of his own great wealth of benefices, would provide a fitting funeral for his cousin: but he did not do so, and even the candles around the bier, so it was said, were those that had been used for the Requiem Mass of the Cardinal Riario.

But this death which brought ruin to so many in Rome was enfranchisement for others, and, before Christmas, the papal lieutenant had been thrown out of a window in the palazzo at Urbino, and the lord duke Francesco Maria della Rovere was back there with the whole of the duchy in his hands. The lord Baldassare came to tell me of this, and to indulge in reminiscence with one who was intimate with the golden past. He said that the Cardinal Cajetan, who was occupying the Montefeltro palazzo in the Corso, had written to our lady that he was ready to resign it: and then he asked me, if, under the altered conditions I would consider entering once again into the service of the two duchesses. I could not hesitate over this, and the reasons I gave for my refusal were that the past could never be re-constructed, and that in any case I had never felt other than irrelevant in the court after the death of my first husband: and I begged the lord Baldassare to make no mention of me in his letters. He said that he understood my feeling, and that he himself was of two minds about it all. As envoy in Rome for the marquis of Mantua, he was now committed once again to the service of his kinsman the Gonzaga, and yet I knew that lying tongues would certainly busy themselves to misrepresent him as ungrateful if he did not return to Urbino.<sup>1</sup> It was probably this conversation which was the cause of the offer to become the duenna of the duchessina Caterina conveyed to me by the lady Clarice a few days later, she saying that I had been recommended to the Cardinal Giulio as one trained in the usages of princely courts. The recommendation was certainly not her

own, because I realised her as displeased, and for the reason that her offer to bring Caterina, for the time being, to the via Banco San Spirito had not been accepted.

Bastard he was, but the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici was now the only male adult representative of the line of Cosimo *Pater Patriæ*. I doubt if at this time, or indeed for many years afterwards, he had any certain design for the future of the three children now together in the palazzo Medici. The two boys had been sent there from San Pietro when the Cardinal returned to Rome, and he had removed the duchessina from the guardianship of the Salviati, who were returning to Florence, and had placed her there as well. He came from his own immense palazzo in the campo del Fiore on the day I began my duties, and I was summoned to an audience with him in the great chamber whose windows looked on the one side into the courtyard, and on the other into the garden. Despite his inveterate reluctance to be explicit, he gave me a conception of his motives in wishing to have some woman without compromising prejudices living in contact with the child Caterina and her cousins. (For so he spoke of the two boys.) I saw he realised San Pietro to have been a forcing bed, and, to continue the metaphor, that he wanted to plant the children in a cool frame: that he desired for them the discipline and routine of an ordinary home. I, with my needlework, my religious habits, my placid humour, and my capacity for domestic diversions such as games and music, was required to make an atmosphere in which the three would develop more serenely, and be sundered, as far as possible, from the passions and the restlessness of the outer world. That this would be forever impossible of accomplishment in Rome may have been as patent to the Cardinal as it was to myself, but I kissed his ring with all the deliberate grace I could muster without committing myself to the expression of any doubts.

I never heard it questioned that the Cardinal de' Medici would be the next Pope until the conclave began after Christmas, when other rumours were at once afloat, and day after day went by and no decision reached. I was as astonished, as all in Rome and in the whole world, and (it was said) in the conclave itself, when it was established that the choice had fallen by one vote upon a foreign Cardinal whose very existence was unrealised by the commonalty: this was the Cardinal of Tortosa in Spain, who was a Fleming, and had been the tutor of the

emperor Charles. And it was owing to the Cardinal de' Medici himself that it came about; for seeing that the French faction led by the Orsini would never allow his own election, he had put forth name after name to them in vain, and then, after the eleventh failure, had exclaimed that it remained only to choose a Cardinal of unblemished reputation who was not present. It was a confused story, and I think it was in confusion that the final scrutiny was made with a result which filled all the streets with curses and lamentations.

In the palazzo Medici, as may be conceived, interest in the result of the conclave was very great, and as the days went by and it became evident Ippolito was not to be held in leash, it was arranged for an armed exodus to the piazza S. Pietro, and I was myself, in mask and hood, more than once of the party. On the first occasion I felt guilty, for when the Cardinals crossed the piazza in procession to San Pietro after the Mass of the Holy Ghost, we were in real danger from the great press of the people, but on other days the crowd varied in size, the on-lookers being in greater number towards evening when there was the chance of seeing the smoke rising from the chimney beside the Sistine Chapel; white smoke signalling that yet another scrutiny had been without result. The piazza itself was a strange sight all day long, with a forest of crosses and banners upheld by kneeling groups of the Canons of San Pietro, of the children from San Spirito, and from every sort of Confraternity. There was ever-recurring chanting of *Veni Creator*, and one afternoon Ippolito observed at my elbow that the Holy Spirit seemed to have left Rome for good: and I had dissatisfaction as I looked round into his young face derisive at my shoulder, realising that here was a scepticism, already mature, which no chiding from me could modify. His eyes were inscrutable as he looked across to the confusion of the roofs and windows of the great papal palazzo, and I could feel him stiffening beside me as if he knew himself as exile from it in a universe where only inflexibility could prevail.

We were at dinner when news of the end came unexpectedly after so long a delay, and the major-domo advised that no one should go into the streets. Ippolito however escaped all authority and did not return until late evening. It was vain to scold him. He said that the crowds were everywhere, pursuing the Cardinals with blasphemies as they returned to their palazzi. I asked messer Valeriano next day at supper-time to make clear to me the reasons for such wide-spread denunciation. He was somewhat of a pedant and so he chose to classify the dissatisfaction, saying that in the first place it touched the pride of every good

Italian in the Papacy that it should fall into the hands of a foreigner and of humble birth such as this Adrian of Utrecht. In the second place it touched the pockets of every tradesman in Rome, because the Cardinal of Tortosa was in Spain, many months must elapse before he could arrive in Italy, and during that time the city would empty itself. In the third place, everyone to whom the princely court of Pope Leo had meant livelihood, and they numbered thousands, saw ruin as their lot. And, in the fourth place, the new Pope was undoubtedly a man of very lofty character and austere life, and the Curia itself had cause to tremble with dismay at what it had done.

I was curious to know how the Cardinal Giulio himself would take it all. The weather was terrible, with torrents of rain followed by a great frost, piercing winds from the north, and finally falling snow. It all added to a wretchedness which seemed universal, and we heard that the Cardinal was abed with a severe catarrh and fever: then that he was better, and was leaving at once by sea for Florence fearing to go by land because the duke of Urbino was reported to be marching on Siena. The two boys were summoned to bid him farewell, and they came back with the intelligence that they themselves and Caterina were to follow to Florence later on, if all should be well there.

With this prospect ahead, it was not easy for any of us to settle down to a tranquil mode of life, and the vivacity of every gathering around the supper table proved how much our minds were invaded by the future. Messer Valeriano had his own apartments in the palazzo, and the two boys dined with him, but the Cardinal had suggested that at supper-time everyone should meet together at a common table, and to this sometimes came Fra Bernardo, the Confessor, and sir Andrea Casella who was charged with the instruction of the boys in the manly exercises. It was my arrangement that Caterina should be with us too, and that her nurse, Paola, should remain in the chamber at her needle by the window. Caterina sat as a rule in her high chair by my side, and I had to be repressive of her spasmodic efforts to exercise her growing powers of speech, for they were all directed to display of her adoration for Ippolito and of her sustained passion of dislike for Alessandro: and there was no doubt at all that the child was well aware that universal sympathy was with her. After supper Ippolito always played with her for a time, but he was very interested in a painted gravicembalo I had found in the palazzo and which I was trying to teach myself to play, and then, too, I had undertaken the task of giving him lessons in the dance. I did my best to include Alessandro in every diversion, but his

churlishness was inveterate, and sometimes messer Valeriano would impatiently exert his authority and make him sit down to backgammon with himself, or would set him in front of a solitaire board: I often reflected as I looked at the boy's graceless countenance that the most ancient of all ingritudes is that of children for their governors. I myself was finding a new zest in all things. I realised that even an awakened care for my own adornment was part of a deep acquiescence in this semblance of a home where the untroubled hours brought that power to enjoy the present which is immortality.

Easter came and we were still in Rome. The palazzo S. Pietro remained dark and silent, and there was still nothing but gloom in all countenances. Ippolito was anxious to make the expedition to San Giovanni in Laterano, to see the heads of San Pietro and San Paolo displayed there on Easter Eve; and I myself had a curiosity, for my husband would never let me go so far. I and the two boys rode, with sir Andrea and grooms in attendance, and I thought our trouble well repaid. The heads were side by side behind an iron grating, and when the curtain was withdrawn for a space of time in which it was possible to say an *Ave Maria*, we could see the Holy Apostles clearly. San Pietro was to be distinguished by the papal tiara, and under it was a long face of fair complexion with ruddy cheeks and a forked grey beard: while San Paolo had a very bushy beard, and his head was much broader and the skin dark. The vast church was but sparsely thronged, for it was whispered that there had been deaths from the plague in the city, and the physicians had advised against assembly in public places, and nearly all the Cardinals had gone to their country villas or elsewhere. We rode back between monasteries and convents and their gardens, past some squalid houses where Ippolito and Alessandro became hilarious at the sight of the meaner sort of courtesans openly displaying themselves behind lattices, and then came over the hill of the Quirinale down into the Corso, and so to the Rotunda and our palazzo just beyond it. It was a day of blue and vaporous distances, and here and there, along the tops of walls, or bending over patches of meadow-grass, had been great drifts of fruit-blossom lustrous and exultant. I said to myself that it was because my youth had gone that this spring of flower and fragrance and light meant nothing, and that the story of the Resurrection seemed this Eastertide to be but a tale calling from far time to a silence that was un-stirred. We were at High Mass the next day in the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva on the other side of the Rotunda. It was a vast and solemn church with pointed arches, and under the altar a sarco-



phagus containing the body of the holy Santa Caterina of Siena. The sunshine was slanting in on to the white and gold of the vestments, there were unfinished cadences and the shrill reading of the gospel: it all seemed useless, an effort about nothing, a chaos in which personal holiness would be always unavailing. With his usual thoughtfulness, the lord Baldassare had lately sent me for my perusal copy of a letter which he had received from his Excellency Monsignor Sadoletto far away in France, he rejoicing greatly in the new papal election and all that it might mean for true religion. But on this Easter morning I was feeling that the spirit of Rome itself would always prevail, and that on this soil a destiny had been fulfilled, and that here mankind had lost its spiritual fruitfulness for ever. As we walked back merrily across the piazza della Rotunda and mingled with the congregation that was coming from under the portico of that church, the very look of the buildings, and the arid intelligence in the faces of the people, seemed to be denials of the existence of any transformation in human life by the event we had been commemorating. But I did not confess my failure of heart to messer Valeriano, who had accompanied myself and the two boys to the Mass, for I knew him to be impious to the core behind his bland decorum, and the cultured cynicism which assumes to itself the quality of a philosophy ever seems to me in the nature of a vulgarity.

What was a certitude was that I was weary of Rome. I had learned that the reason of the delay in starting for Florence was, in the first place, that the Papal States through which we must pass were in a state of unrest; and then, later, that there was difficulty over the provision of men-at-arms. But at last we had the news that the day of departure had been fixed and that the lady Clarice Strozzi was making use of the opportunity and would go with us.

It was on a May morning that I found myself with the span of the arch of the porta del Popolo over my head, and with the evil odours and the inquietude of Rome behind me. A wooded hill rose beyond the gate on the right, and cypresses bordered the road which ran past the villa Pope Julius had built for himself to the ponte Milvio: a few miles farther on we again crossed the Tiber crawling between its rushes in the pallid plain mottled with sunshine and the shadows of clouds. I rode at the side of the lady Clarice with a mule beneath me eager to break into an amble.

The pace was set by the litter which carried the duchessina and her

nurse and another with two of the infants of the Strozzi. The captain of the escort turned now and again to make sure that the cavalcade was not straggling. The men-at-arms had been provided from the troops of the lord Giovanni de' Medici, and they carried a black banner and wore black shoulder-belts as mourning for Pope Leo, in place of the Medici colours of white and purple. They had been given mounts for the journey, and the dun-coloured gelding of the captain Jacopo Marcucci was free in its paces, so that the boy Alessandro, endeavouring to keep alongside him, must forever jog in the saddle like a sack of flour. Ippolito, on his favourite black mule, held himself aloof behind them. In the courtyard of the palazzo Medici, before we started, I had realised in him a fever of anticipation, and that fires of wild fancy and bewildered imagination were alight. He had given me one of his dark unseeing looks, and now as I watched him faring solitary amid this company, with his legs swinging nonchalantly free of the stirrups, my heart was as lead within me, because I knew that capacity for living does not mean capacity for life.

A pilgrimage which includes babes, young boys, and women is of necessity an unhurried affair, and, after leaving the Flaminian gate, it was over two weeks before we came to the porta Romano of Florence. It was spring weather, and all the land was in a riot of growth. The campagna itself had its harvest of poppies, growing in profusion among giant fennel and tall purple thistles, and, beyond its wastes, were vineyards full of dwarf grapes, groves of acacia bursting into bloom, and vetches fragrant along the dustiest highway; while on the mountain roads where the ailanthus trees displayed their fan-like foliage, feathery pinks, white and red, tumbled in clusters and campanulas pushed their way through the trailing clematis. Each day had new beauties and fresh experiences in weather that was nearly unfailing in its serenity. All the past seemed improbable, and all the future ill-begotten necessity.

It was, I think, its sterility without boundaries, its isolated, distant watch towers, and its melancholy fragments of aqueducts, which gave exaggerated aspect to the immensities of the Roman plain. I had been instructed by my late husband that in a not very distant past it had been well-wooded with groves which the Goths and Vandals had spared, and that it had been populated, and had borne abundant crops. It was the Colonna and Orsini and other noble families that had devastated it with their undying feuds of the last few hundred years, and who had gradually cleared away all cover which might harbour an ambush. The great post road we were following had always been kept in repair, some

portions of it being elevated, and some still paved as of old. Remote, in the distance on the right, were the mountains, rugged and full of deep clefts, and still tipped here and there with snow. One does not retain detailed impression of extended travel that has its fatigues as well as its resilient hours, but I do not forget that, after having been out of sight of it all day, we halted for a moment for a farewell glimpse of Rome: its towers appearing at the far extremity of the pure sky, while among the nearer vapours of the evening some oxen stood out, black and huge in the great solitude, and somewhere in the quivering desert a dog was barking. In the gathering darkness, a little later on, we reached a commodious inn where they were prepared for our coming, and next day we were quit of the waste and were set towards Viterbo. I can recall the squalid little town of Ronciglione where we were received in the fine palazzo of the Farnese; also a forbidding valley with a little lake, and the fertile plain beyond it where Viterbo stood on a hill-crest. This was a town of handsome palazzi, and cheerful streets with fountains playing.

Between Viterbo and Siena it was more arduous going, and we had varying fortune with our lodging, which was more than once in convents; the boys sometimes with us, and sometimes consigned to the care of the captain Jacopo. Montefiascone, reached by a steep and barren road, stands out as an unfriendly place of much discomfort; but along the shores of the long lake of Bolsena with its peopled islands, it was happy faring. Later, were forbidding bare mountains; and I remember a defile where we passed and repassed a torrent a hundred times, and a wet evening at La Paglia, with its five or six hovels crouching under gloomy mist-crowned heights, and where we had to make shift in a barn with the cushions and gear from the litters. After that we came to Siena through hills with tilled fields of red earth on their lower slopes, and sheep grazing on the higher acclivities on herbage that was already turning brown. For when we reached Siena it was summer, with roses falling in cascades from the walls of villa gardens in the outskirts.

We stayed in Siena for some days, and this was partly because our escort was to leave us outside the town and the convoy which the Cardinal Giulio was sending from Florence had not arrived. But the lady Clarice had in any case designed not to hurry on for she had relatives and friends to see: and I realised that we were now in Tuscany and among persons and circumstances that called for a new technique: as my

worst weariness wore off I apprehended that at once, and as I knelt at High Mass on the marvellous marble floor of the Cathedral, I watched with curiosity as the Sieneſe ladies and nobles and the merchants with their families sauntered and talked in the throng round the altar. I had grown used in Rome to the Sunday Maſſ as a ſocial rendezvous, but although levity here was not ſo frank and not nearly ſo richly attired, I had the ſenſe that it was more fundamental, and that here were vices and virtues hatched in a remoter civilisation than that of Greece and Rome, and with a longer experience of crowded human ſociety.

The duchessina had ſurvived the weary journey without fretfulneſs, had added to her vocabulary, and even appeared to have grown a little. Ippolito was pale with the great heat of the laſt days, but he looked hardy notwithstanding, and radiated with a vitality that had regained its poize. It was Alessandro alone of all the party whom the journey had battered, and at times it had been neceſſary to carry him in the ſpare litter. There was nothing but contemptuous impatience for his want of ſtamina, but the lady Clarice ſaid that ſhe muſt get him to Siena alive becauſe he was too obviously a creature better dead: at Siena was the beſt medical ſchool in all Italy, if not in the world,<sup>2</sup> and if the doctors had ſufficient reaſoning power—ſo ſhe shrugged—it would relieve her of reſponſibility for any miſhap. But when we reached the city gate, we found that it had been arranged for the two boys to be lodged with the Archbiſhop Piccolomini, in his palazzo which linked the hoſpitals to the Cathedral, and, thus encompassed, the ill-begotten Alessandro was ſufficiently recovered to be ſet up in the ſaddle again when we left for Florence.

Knowing all her feeling about the two baſtards (as ſhe never failed to label them), I had ſet out on this pilgrimage from Rome with apprehenſion that the days would bring difficulties for myſelf, and that it would not be eaſy to maintain nonchalance if the lady Clarice ever gave her temper licence in any matter that concerned Ippolito. But my fears ſoon died down. She frequently made miſtakes in life through impulse, but ſhe was never ſtupid, and I became aware that ſhe had reaſoned with herſelf about a future that was not yet calculable and ſaw that it was not ſtrategy to make her own deſires too unambiguous. She had all the Medici charm when ſhe choſe to exert it, and was piqued more than once, I think, during the long ſunny days, by Ippolito's coolneſs: he could aſſume an air of remote courtesy which was not boyiſh at all. Could he have reaſoned with himſelf too, I ſpeculated:

was it possible that he had decided that the lady Clarice did not matter very much after all?

And if he had really been assuring himself of that, he was perhaps more fully convinced of it in Siena, when he found himself quartered in the Archiepiscopal palazzo, saw Caterina (in the charge of myself) lodged by the Signoria in the palazzo del Capitano on the other side of the square, and knew that the lady Clarice was only a private guest in the house of the Bichi. Had I possessed more acumen, I might have been able to suggest to him how little real significance any of it had, and that it was but the outcome of the latest throw of the dice in the jumbled history of the town. For the last thirty years or so the Petrucci family had occupied in Siena much the same prevailing position as the Medici did in Florence: they had been ejected by the lord Cesare Borgia, but had returned, and had been upheld both by Pope Julius and Pope Leo; and to foster Medici friendship was still Petrucci policy even under the altered conditions. The Petrucci palazzo was just opposite that of the Capitano, at the end of the narrow street which emerged into the piazza before the dazzling façade of the Cathedral. It was Cardinal Raefello Petrucci<sup>3</sup> who now represented the family, and who had arranged that the Medici children should be honourably received, and I saw from a window, on the day after our arrival, that Ippolito was to supper with him. My son had now reached the age when a boy begins to be meticulous in his care for appearance if he considers that occasion calls for it, and it was a young prince whom I saw disappear under the archway opposite, and who came out of the courtyard again an hour or so later in the company of some gaily clad and laughing young men. They all walked down the street which led to the centre of the city. Towards nightfall I was told that Ippolito was below, and asked entrance to enquire for the duchessina and myself.

Here was independence of action and spirit; and, as he crossed the threshold with his plumed cap gracefully held, I saw that he was enjoying the knowledge of it. He was proudly alive, visibly exhilarated by the adventures of the afternoon which I made no doubt included the adulation of many a woman's smiling eyes. I adored him as he came towards me, realising that the crown of the happiness of this day was to be that I should applaud him, bathed, trussed, scented and curled, after the dusty carelessness of the past weeks. Courtier-wise he kissed my hand and cheek, and I rejoiced that I had insisted on some unpacking of the gear and could counter his elegance in a silk robe. I saw with a little pang that he was wearing, pendant on a finely wrought chain, a

device in diamonds and gold with a hanging pearl that I knew but too well. I took it in my palm as we stood together by the window, and he told me that it had belonged to his father who had entrusted it to the Cardinal da Bibbiena, and that the Cardinal had given it to him, with other things, on the day before he died. Tears came into his eyes, and I said to him gently that I knew it must seem to him that he had lost all those who loved him, but that he could believe it was not really so, and that in the new life ahead there would be affection for him if he had the courage to win it for himself, as we must all do as we grow in years. Then I asked him to tell me about his host, the Archbishop, and about the Cardinal's supper party, and all that he had done since. He said that on the morrow, when I was more rested, I must not fail to go forth afoot and see this odd city which was quite unlike Rome or any of the towns we had passed through, and that he himself would like to be my cicerone. I took him presently to see Caterina who was now abed but by no means inclined for sleep. She gurgled with joy at sight of him, as she ever did, and struggled from between the bedclothes, standing precariously when he sat beside her and flinging her plump arms around him to steady herself. She was vain of her growing conversational powers and displayed them in an incessant stream of questioning as children are wont. Ippolito remained romping with her and parrying her queries with banter as long as Paola would let him, and as I stood watching, it occurred to me to wonder if it had ever come to his young ears that the envoy sent by the king of France to condole with Pope Leo on the death of Caterina's parents had been charged to suggest her early marriage to the bastard of the lord Giuliano and the bestowal on him of the duchy of Urbino.

The morning of our departure came, and as Pietro Oltiviti, the major-domo of our expedition, helped me to mount my mule, he thanked the saints genially that we were bidding farewell to this cursed place: they told him his inn was the best in Siena, he said, but it was swarming with lice, not even linen in the windows, and nothing for the belly but sour wine. He thwacked my mule on the flank, telling me that the lord Ippolito was awaiting me without, and, side by side, my son and I clattered after the litters through the narrow curving street which ran all along the crest of a hill from one end of the city to the other. One momentary halt we made where there was a gap in the tall houses and a stairway of brick went down to the wide expanse of the Campo, concave like a shell. The morning sun was warming all the rosy surfaces of the great buildings around it, and unforgettable among the sights I have

known in this world soared the tower of the Magnia, glorious pillar for the lucid sky above. Figures were busied at the foot of the tower and we realised that a scaffold was being erected.

The men-at-arms arrived from Florence, and who stood waiting for us beside their horses outside the Camollia gate of Siena, were far fewer in number than those who had come with us from Rome. When I remarked on this presently to the lady Clarice, she said that in Tuscany the danger from brigands was not so great as it was in the States of the Church; and as the day went on, and we climbed and descended the hillslopes, I saw that all the land that was not wooded was under tillage and very fertile, and peopled. We drew near to Florence after the midday halt on the second day of our journey.

Looking back on that hour, I realise that my mind was attuned, not to emotion, but to an in-gathering of impressions. I was very tired, but when we sighted a great monastery on an over-topping hill on the left, and the lady Clarice announced that we were now very close to our destination, I forgot my fatigue in the resolve to be adequate in apprehension of this city set in all the dreams of the lord Giuliano, and now, as I was persuaded, the *Fata Morgana* of his son. We went downhill towards it between groves that lined and shadowed the roadway, and it was at the end of a tunnel of pines that a gatehouse, lifted above a great wall, came into view. The packhorses had all gone on ahead that morning with a small escort, and presently the remainder of the men-at-arms drew together and made away along a track to the right. It was only a small party that passed under the gateway after some slight formalities, and found itself in a little piazza and facing a tavern with a fresco painted across its windowless first storey. An elderly man who looked like a country steward or bailiff came forward and saluted the lady Clarice, and three or four others who seemed to be grooms, although they were without livery, got up from a bench where they had been sitting with their wine cups. Immediately I found myself with one of them at my bridle, and that we were making our way along a track over a grassy waste where cattle were feeding to some thatched hovels and a very large palazzo, partially windowless and roofless, built on the crest of a hillock;<sup>4</sup> and I was beginning to be disconcerted by the forlorn aspect of everything, when we were suddenly in a street between tall houses. This was a street of traffic in all manner of commodities, and I was so busy turning my head the one way and the other that, before I

was aware, we were past a tall archway and a tower on the right, and were trailing over a bridge across a river. Then suddenly, and through a pillared and arched interval in the dwellings which lined it at either end,<sup>5</sup> we were face to face with a flaming pageant, for the sun was now low in a sky that was a furnace, and the surfaces of the palazzi and the parapet on the opposite bank were a blaze of burning orange rising from a burnished strip of the river flowing beneath them. Ippolito, halted beside me, touched my arm, and he would have me turn my head and look up-stream where was the clear, temperate contrasting vision of the outlines of nearer hills and more distant mountains. Deep-toned bells were chiming and reverberating among the towers of the city, and I recalled that the morrow was the feast of San Barnaba.

We could not linger on the peopled bridge for the litters were pressing behind us, and beyond it we plunged into a maze of concentrated alleys packed with moving figures. I do not think that I had made for myself any picture of an exultant progress of the children of the Medici through the streets of Florence between welcoming crowds, but, after the urbanities of Siena, I was unprepared for the unambiguous fact that we were making our way unremarked through the lively throngs that were everywhere. Ippolito was sitting his mule with his comeliness blurred as if by a definite effort of his own will, and I knew at once, and rejoiced in the knowledge, that it was instinct which had taught him this air of eclipse. Ever since we had clattered out of the courtyard of the palazzo in Rome, I had nursed a misgiving about the hour when we should enter that other palazzo which was our goal, and I had feared an exultant demeanour; for complacency in the pursuit of pretensions must always be a matter for ridicule unless one is in the very act of realising them and coming to the honour that is so hardly to be attained.

The dusk was gathering fast when we crossed a wide piazza where I realised that we were looking on the Duomo and its satellites; beyond it we entered into the gloom of a corridor of frowning windowed walls, and then, at a corner to the left, there towered a moody and insolent palazzo. Its impregnable-looking doors were closed, and as we waited by them for what seemed an interminable time, the litter with the duchessina came up, and with it the lady Clarice. She showed considerable temper, and spoke sharply to the small crowd which had gathered and which was indulging in curious comments: and she had still more pungent things to say when the doors were at length dragged back from within and we all made a scrambling and somewhat undignified



entry. I was so exhausted that I think I was conscious of nothing at the time but the instant chill, of darkness formidable behind the pillars of the cortile, and then that we were climbing a vaulted stairway, by the illumination of one torch carried ahead of us. This was no teeming household. Only two lacqueys had been below, and no one at all seemed to be above as we followed the lady Clarice through deserted rooms. But at length was the gleam of a lighted doorway, and an elderly woman in a coif came from it, hurrying to meet us, calling to serving-maids behind her, and all volubility and capacity. My own chamber was well-appointed—so I felt, rather than saw. They brought to me there a supper and sweet wine, and helped me to disrobe. I commented idiotically, as I laid my dizzy head upon it, that the silk of my pillow was striped: and then I wondered hazily what had become of the two boys. It was long past noon on the following day when I awakened.

It was many weeks before I saw the boys again. Some quiet days went by when I was content to do no more than see my possessions unpacked and find resting-places for them. The rooms of the duchessina, out of which mine own opened, looked out on a garden. The palazzo was skirted on three sides by streets, and this enclosure was on the fourth side and ended in a grove. I had gazed out of the windows frequently, making sure that I should see Ippolito; but the garden paths were quite deserted; and then it occurred to me to wonder where the Cardinal Giulio himself could be, and questioning donna Antonia, I discovered that the Cardinal was at the villa of Careggi three miles distant from the city, and that he had sent for the two boys to join him there. Presently I learnt that it was his command that the duchessina and myself should shortly leave Florence too for the more distant villa of Poggio a Caiano, and that we should remain there as long as the summer heat lasted, the lady Clarice being ill-content with this, for she had designed to have Caterina with her at the Strozzi villa of Le Selve. She came more than once from the palazzo Strozzi, and the lady Lucrezia came too from the palazzo Salviati, bringing with her the lady Maria and the boy Cosimo. He was still fat and stolid, backward in speech and with an unchildlike reserve. The two children forever declined to make friends, and I was never at great pains to exhort Caterina to a better demeanour. Ladies from the Pazzi, the Rucellai and the Ridolfi families all made their cousinship a motive for visits

of curiosity, and I almost believed that the three-year-old Caterina began to entertain suspicion of her own consequence.

We went to the villa Reale in the third week in June. This was not the only summer that I spent there, but the next few months have always been an oasis in my memory. I think this is because, under the undeviating blue of a sky that was near enough to be a robe and mantle, and yet was so distant that it seemed to contain all eternity, I learned the strength for the spirit that lies in passivity, and to find no reason why the repose should not last for ever. The great house, set upon a gently sloping hillock, was entirely surrounded by a terrace of a noble width carried on arches, below which the spreading garden lost itself in groves, here backed by azure of mountain ranges, there opening on enchanting vistas. Between the hour when the dewy darkness was rolled from the sky by the dawn, and that other hour when the owls would begin to call to one another and the red stars would appear one by one, there were long, still days that burned themselves into my blood and seemed to belong to a titanic past. I was able to be out of doors almost perpetually in the shade which the house cast across the terraces with books beside me and my embroidery in my hand, and with Caterina, at certain hours, at play near by. The supper-table was always carried out to me, and as I watched the wine lighting the crystal of a stemmed goblet, or listened to a fountain plashing in its tank and giving idle voice to the silence, I knew a strange rapture: it seemed as though I were returned from a long way off to an unthinking place where the wan failure of my loneliness was yoked to a sense of communion with a wonder which was distinct from myself: as if they were but two aspects of one sacred thing.

But the days at the villa were not, of course, entirely eventless—there was this and that—and then one day a summons on the gates of the enclosure, a scurrying from the guardroom to uncloset them, and the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, with Ippolito and Alessandro, rode unattended into the domain.

The Cardinal had come from the villa at Careggi partly to satisfy himself of the well-being of Caterina, and partly to inspect some unfinished frescoes on which artists had been at work in the great chamber at the time of the death of Pope Leo. The stages and scaffolding were still there under the plaster ceiling where the palle of the Medici were painted in a repeated device, but the Cardinal said, as he sat with me on the terrace later on, that he feared the frescoes would have to wait for

completion until he had paid for works that were afoot in Florence. He related that the late Pope had been very successful in recovering his father's collection of books and manuscripts,<sup>6</sup> and that he proposed to bring the whole library back from Rome, and to build a fitting home for it behind the church of San Lorenzo when he could persuade Michelagnolo Buonorrotti to prepare the design. This man was never of an easy temper, he said, and was now busied with a new chapel for the same church, and which was to contain Medici monuments.

It is not to be supposed that the Cardinal communicated any of this intelligence to me *con amore*. Owing to what I judged to be a poverty of nature, he was never at his ease with women, and, as we waited for supper to be brought, he sat, at a rather comical distance, with his eyes fixed on my busy fingers only and never raised to my face. This made it possible for me to scrutinise him. He was without the beard he grew later on, and the riding-dress, which fitted his tall figure closely, gave him elegance. His skin was too sallow, but his features were finely cut, and apart from a slight cast in one of them, his eyes were beautiful. I knew that Pietro Bembo thought his powers of mind to be of the first order, but I said to myself that energy of unadulterated thought can be dangerous when alongside it there is distrust of life itself: and it seemed to me that latent in him always was a dreary misgiving.

Laughter was audible, and we saw that, in the garden below, Ippolito was giving Caterina a ride on a donkey which he had captured from the gardeners, while to Alessandro had been allotted the task of beating the animal from behind. The Cardinal had no smile for the group, but he put some obvious questions to me about Caterina and I gave him assurances with grave circumspection. It was irksome that he did not stimulate frankness in me, for I longed to say to him that Caterina was already a woman, taking her colour from the person she happened to be with at the moment. The reflection came to me as I sat there that the strange truth about our mutual relationship to the two boys whose voices were so audible was a hateful link between us.

I saw, when the table was brought and laid, that the household had risen to the occasion of this unexpected supper party, and that there was more than sufficient to gratify the appetite of hungry boyhood. I observed too, with a flicker of amusement, that the figs and nectarines seemed to be larger and more luscious and the melon of a better quality than those to which I was accustomed: there was moreover a wine which the Cardinal said was from Montepulciano, and he pronounced it to be the best wine in the world. He ate and drank very sparingly

however, and as if he was only seeing the meal and not really tasting it. Gold embossed plate had been produced in his honour, knives with handles of carved crystal, and wine-glasses of clear blue glass decorated with the Medici arms in coloured enamels. I admired the glasses, and, as a matter of conversation, went on to speak of the admirable luxury of the whole villa. The Cardinal said that it had been the favourite residence of his uncle (Il Magnifico) and that he had written several lyrics here in which the surrounding landscape played its part. He demanded quotation from Ippolito, but this youth gaily shook his head, saying that the ancients justly reasoned that to be ignorant of something should be reckoned among the virtues.

I was a little startled during supper by the momentum which Ippolito had gathered since I had heard his mule stumbling behind mine in the twilight over the threshold in the via Larga. Intelligence and vitality had always been his, but now I saw them linked to a desire for excellence. His spontaneity had acquired form and radiance. He had become—but all too soon—a banner for the imagination. The Cardinal himself was patently under the spell of his merriment which seemed to give airy aim to the life of each one of us.

I did not see Ippolito again until September when, without warning, he appeared one morning at the window of a room that gave on to the terrace, and where I was busied in writing a letter. His bearing was sedate, and I quickly realised him as full of an artless self-importance, this explaining itself when I discovered that he had come to inform my ignorance of the arrival of the new Pope. All his young past had been centred round the Papacy, and it was a natural thing that he should be sensitive and excited about the new conditions, and should have a longing for an interested audience.

My interest was unfeigned. I learned that the new Pontiff, with a fleet of fifty ships, had left the port of Ampolla in Spain early in July, and, following the coastline all the way for safety, had reached Genoa on the 17th day of August, and had found the lord duke of Milan, the lord marquis of Pescara, the Cardinal Pompeo Colonna and the generals of the imperial army assembled to greet him there. After two days he had set sail again for Livorna, where all the Tuscan Cardinals were come together to welcome him, to entertain him at a banquet there, and to persuade him not to proceed to Rome, for within the last two months the plague there had increased in virulence, many thousands

had died, and everyone who was able to do so had fled: the Cardinals de' Medici, Ridolfi, Petrucci, Piccolomini, and Passerini were of one mind that the Pope would be wise to go by way of Pisa and Florence to Bologna, and to remain there until the great heat had abated, and perhaps the worst of the pestilence with it. They had all arrived back from Livorna at the villa Careggi by invitation of Cardinal Giulio, said Ippolito, and for several days had not ceased to laugh over the reception of their proposal: their jests depicting a gaunt figure ravaged by the bodily sufferings of the sea voyage, raising denunciatory voice against the frivolities of his reception, and then melting away like a veritable spectre—the glint of his sails on the horizon being the first notification of his departure for his pest-ridden goal. From Fra Giberti, said Ippolito, he had extorted a more sober account of what had happened.

Fra Gian Giberti had been secretary to the Cardinal Giulio since he was eighteen years old, and was now in Priest's Orders. I had no real acquaintance with him, but his mien seemed to speak of wisdom and virtue, and I knew he had the entire confidence of his master, who had contrived that he should go to Spain with the embassy of the Cardinal-Legates. Thus it was that he had landed with Pope Adrian at Livorna, and Ippolito had cajoled from him the confession that he had been amazed to see the five Cardinals there in lay dress with swords at their sides, and was scandalised that this lack of respect for his Holiness was matched by infelicity of manner and of speech. Their Eminences had not realised that here was a character whom all must respect, declared Gian Giberti in his resentment, and Ippolito learned that the new Pontiff had not failed in dignified rebuke and was unmoved in his decision to proceed to Rome. It was plain that he meant to assume authority as soon as possible, and it was thought, said Ippolito, that the coronation had probably already taken place,<sup>7</sup> and that no haste to be there would avail. None of the Cardinals, so he declared, was desirous to go to Rome at all, but each one saw it would be ultimately imperative, and had left Careggi to prepare for the journey. The Cardinal Giulio himself with the Fra Giberti, Pietro Aretino, and all the usual retinue had set out southwards only yesterday.

I discovered in myself a growing irritation as I listened to the sardonic maturity of this recital, and realised how stripped of the grace of reverence Ippolito's youthful spirit was; and when he disclosed that Pietro Aretino—that soul of pure evil—had been all the summer at Careggi, I was filled with a passion of helpless anger, and it has always been to me

a ludicrous memory that I made Caterina presently the victim of my stifled bitterness. When we had finished dinner Caterina was brought into the sala by Paola, who had welcomed the opportunity of the arrival of a guest to array her in a frock of pink spun silk which I had been at pains to embroider with fine sprigs of green in a diagonal pattern. No doubt it teased me to see my handiwork crumpled and soiled in the romp with Ippolito which ensued: at all events, I found myself without complacency when Paola reappeared to reclaim her, and Caterina, clinging to Ippolito's knees, was passionate in a screaming protest that was without tears: I watched the scene and Ippolito's not ungratified countenance for some seconds, saying to myself that it was laughable, but that in a very few swiftly passing years the display of fondness would be an indecorum—that it was in fact one of those crises in upbringing when nothing but bodily chastisement avails. I went to Paola's assistance with imperative words, and we carried the struggling child away between us, I saying curtly when we came to the nursery that it was no use making a pretence of punishment: and I braced myself to the task and beat her effectively. I braced myself moreover to say to Ippolito, before he rode away presently with his grooms, that this had been an awkwardness for everybody, and I added that although sin could be forgiven, for awkwardness there was no forgiveness in heaven or upon earth. The dictum was not suited to his years, and was certainly somewhat out of proportion to the occasion: but the very grandiosity of it did, I think, succeed in impressing on him, as the beating (so it proved) had impressed on Caterina, that, from henceforth, I demanded less exuberance when they two came together.

At the end of September we were all back in Florence, and, before October was out, the Cardinal Giulio was back there too, and this because the plague in Rome had now begun to attack persons of rank. Cardinal Schinner and the Polish envoy had died, and members of many of the households of the Cardinals and of the foreign embassies. Everybody who could do so had left the city, with the exception of Pope Adrian himself, and even he had shut himself up in solitary seclusion in the Borgia rooms in San Pietro. It was told that the churches were deserted, that most of the banks had closed, that it was difficult to get provisions, and that the dead had to be buried without priestly aid. It was not easy to realise it all when among the cheerful sights and sounds of the streets of Florence. And indeed in the life of quietude which I

lived with Caterina in our rooms apart in the Medici palazzo I began to be unrealising of everything except daily life and the local curiosities I was cultivating: all that existence of states, of distant kingdoms, and of a continuous flux of policies which were part of consciousness in Rome had ceased to be active. It was only an occasional audience with the Cardinal Giulio, whenever he happened to remember the existence of Caterina, which took me back into the atmosphere of a more pulsating life: and that because he himself was so plainly chafing at his exile from it.

Yet his exile lasted no longer than the winter (1522-3). The Cardinal had been confirmed in his office of Legate for Tuscany, and he dwelt in the archiepiscopal palazzo near the Cathedral, apparently absorbed in Florentine affairs, but, as it proved, only watching opportunity to step back on to the larger stage of Rome. In March I learned that a Sicilian had been brought into the city at nightfall in the custody of men-at-arms. There was mystery, and furtive animation, but I could disentangle nothing, and had almost forgotten the incident, when Ippolito came to me one day as I was walking in the garden. He told me that this man had been captured as he was travelling to Venice, that he was carrying letters which proved that Cardinal Soderini had been plotting with the French, that the Cardinal Giulio had sent the letters at once to the Imperial Ambassador in Rome, and that the courier was just returned bearing a summons to the Cardinal de' Medici from his Holiness. Ippolito was excited and voluble, and deeply interested in all the hurried preparations for the journey. I did not believe him when he said that a thousand horsemen were to be raised as escort; but so it was. Caterina and I, together with the lady Clarice and her young family, watched the departure from a window which had been placed at our disposal in the palazzo of the Signoria, and I saw that the lady Clarice, but for the presence of the children, would have had what was objurgatory to say about the parade. Perhaps it served its intended purpose, for it came to Florence presently that the Cardinal was re-established in Rome with all his old prestige, and that his palazzo was become a much more active centre for affairs than that of S. Pietro.

Then, after a quiet summer, which I again spent with Caterina at Poggio a Caiano, while the boys were again at Careggi with their preceptors, we heard that the Holy Father was dead. Two months later all Florence was in the streets to celebrate the election of a second Medici Pope. And at the end of November, Ippolito and Alessandro left the city for Rome, their going being as inconspicuous as their coming had been. I realised their withdrawal to be for their own greater safety, and

I had supposed that Ippolito would be eager to return to the glories of S. Pietro; but he was curiously sulky about it. The wealthier Florentine families were an intricate cousinship, and he had become one of a band of youths who played and jousted and rode hawking in the hills. He was as much a favourite with them as Alessandro was the reverse, and he may have been lamenting that all this boyish fun, which he had known for the first time, was at an end. But it is never really possible to divine what lies at the root of youthful moods.

The winter which followed (1523-4) was as uneventful for me as the previous one had been, but by the time it was over I had begun to have some consciousness of the exigencies of Florence; yet to apprehend that one needed to be of Florentine blood if one was to appraise its temper. I found donna Antonia to be a quarry of all that lesser information which is often very enlightening. She alleged herself to be of the Medici, and I did not probe that statement; but I was to discover that Medici was a name of frequent occurrence among the citizens. Long before the era of Giovanni, the father of Cosimo *Pater Patriæ*, and his brother Lorenzo, the family had been both prosperous and prolific. Giovanni's grandfather, Salvestro, had been envoy of the Republic to Venice in 1336, and had three sons; Salvestro's father, Averado, who had been the wealthiest citizen in Florence, had six sons; Averado's grandfather Filippo, who had first established the bank in the Mercato Nuovo, had two sons. There was no need to wonder that the name of Medici should be found here and there in all walks of life. Donna Antonia had a clear-cut legend about the origin of the family, maintaining the first known ancestor to have been named Chiarissimo, and to have had a small holding in the Mugello, and a wife with a herb-garden and a great knowledge of roots and herbs. In the year of our Lord 1200, she said, their grandson possessed a tower in the city near San Tommaso at the corner of the Mercato Vecchio, and under it was a little shop for the sale of his grandmother's recipes. The shop had a sign of seven large pills over the door and its owner was called 'il medico' and combined his trade with the business of money-lending. It was not improbably true,<sup>8</sup> and I only wished it were possible to carry the tale further back still, for Pietro Bembo would ever have it that the Florentines, clinking money behind the bank counters in Rome, were out of Asia, from the Lydia of old, where money had first been coined in the ancient world; the Lydians being the great mercantile and sea power of remote antiquity.



One day in Rome he had brought with him the *Annals* of Tacitus<sup>9</sup> to prove to my husband that it was a legend with the Etruscans that they were from Lydia: and had furnished proof from Herodotus and Strabo that a host from Lydia had landed at the mouth of the Po and had crossed the Apennines. My husband said that this opened an endless vista of buried civilisations, but that there had also been a migration into Tuscany of a tribe from the north, and that he believed the Etruscans (his own Strozzi ancestors he called them) to be a mixed race.

The memory of this conversation always made me look with interest at the portrait of the father of the lord Cosimo *Pater Patriæ* in the palazzo. Families have a character which is quite apart from that of their individual members, and how this comes to be so, and why one family differs from another in glory even as the stars themselves, will ever be a riddle. I have heard it maintained that the conservation of repute in a family is wholly a matter of its marriages, and that it is the beauty and strength of character brought to it by the wives of a race throughout generations which alone preserve a family's stability and renown. This may well and truly be the rock on which nobility is founded, but I noted that there was not a single woman's portrait either in the representation of the generations of the Medici family on the walls of the chapel in the palazzo, or in a picture depicting the Adoration of the Magi by an artist Alessandro Filipepi (ditta Botticelli) and where a Medici family group stands and kneels in the foreground. This painter owed all his welfare to the lady Lucrezia Tornabuoni, the mother of the Magnifico Lorenzo, but, although he was an inmate of the Medici palazzo for many long years, he never employed his brush to portray her. Donna Antonia showed me where his studio had been in a room giving on to the garden.<sup>10</sup>

Donna Antonia was always much occupied about the rooms of the palazzo, very voluble about their glory as she remembered them in her youth, and rejoicing greatly when at intervals, from here and there, this and that picture or statue, painted chest or jewelled vase, was brought back and given over to her charge by a certain messer Ottaviano de' Medici, whose status I never quite divined, but who had as wife a daughter of the lady Lucrezia Salviati and who seemed to be acting as agent in this restoration. He was a small and rotund gentleman of cheerful countenance, and I made acquaintance with him one day as I was contemplating the great twin pictures of Pope Leo. The one picture, as I knew, had been painted by Raffaello Sanzi in Rome, and I had heard that the lord marquis of Mantua had asked for it after the death of his

Holiness, and that the Cardinal Giulio, not finding it convenient to refuse the request, had sent the picture first of all to Florence to be copied by Andrea del Sarto. The original and the copy had just been carried up the stairs from Andrea's studio in the via del Mandorlo, and messer Ottaviano asked me if I could distinguish the one from the other. I pretended that I could, but I was not really sure, and he laughed so much that I began to wonder which of the two pictures would travel to Mantua. The one that did not go was afterwards hung in the presence chamber and I often scrutinised it.<sup>11</sup>

I asked messer Ottaviano on this occasion if there was any portrait of Pope Leo's father to be yet recovered. He said that neither painted portrait nor sculptured bust of the lord Lorenzo had ever existed, but he was triumphant that he had just found the whereabouts of the terracotta bust, by Antonio Pollajuolo, of the lord Giuliano, brother of the Magnifico, and he hoped to be able to procure it in due time. There had been also a portrait by Filipepi of the younger lord Giuliano as a boy which he felt confident was still somewhere in Florence. All this needed much patience and circumvention, he said, for, as I would realise, enhanced prices were asked for all this stolen property: and he told me of the exorbitant sum asked for some jasper and agate vases which the marchioness of Mantua had tried in vain to procure through messer Leonardo da Vinci twenty years before. He himself was commissioned by Pope Clement to try to get them back at some reasonable figure, but so far he had met with no success. But I think what had given messer Ottaviano, and donna Antonia too, most pleasure of all was to see two very large pictures by Alessandro Filipeppi restored to their original places in the great chamber. One was a design with many figures meant to represent the coming of spring: I thought it not undecorative, but I preferred the other which was a very pure and lovely figure of Venus risen from the sea.

Caterina had no natural grace of deportment, and partly as exercise for her in the art of walking, which must be learnt at an early age, if it is to be acquired at all, I would often make a promenade with her through all these unpeopled chambers and corridors. Young as she was, she was extremely observant, and little of the gradually restored splendour escaped her. Not seldom did I wonder about her as I looked down on her strutting importantly beside me. I had seen women monopolise all that makes life worth living, and become the glory of distinguished families; but I doubted if room would ever be made on the Florentine stage for any woman.

I looked at Florence and tried to see, I listened and tried to hear, but I suppose the knowledge I acquired was no more than a selection made by my senses. It seemed as if the plant man had here found a soil of almost excessive fertility, for the wealth of production in every art and craft was amazing, the whole city being honey-combed with studios, workshops and printing presses. All this activity rested on the twin foundations of family life and the Church, and was embellished with the pursuit of learning<sup>12</sup> and with the grace and vivacity of much love-making. It was all a rhythm—as if a music had been set free which impelled everyone to fall in with it: and it was difficult to acknowledge the necessity for passion about the uncreative business of government at all.

The only alternation in government, for a whole century now, had meant either the Medici, or the exclusion of the Medici. The actual machinery behind the choice of a head for the state had been varied and added to by one influence or another, but the Parlamento, the Balìa, and the Signoria<sup>13</sup> were still in existence. There would be judicature and taxation always, and venality would continuously prevail; but it did not seem to me that the authentic welfare of this vivid community was entangled in its political decisions at all. Whether it remained Medicean or no, it could never extricate itself from some share in the troubles of the rest of Italy to which it was connected by a thousand ties, and it would occasionally find itself defaced and impoverished by warfare whatever its choice of political conduct: and whether the howling in the paved alleys between the dark houses was *palle* or whether it was the alternative *popolo è libertà*, real life, dominated by prejudices with their roots in remotest antiquity, would be ultimately untouched: that was my conviction about it all.

But if, for Florence, true consummation did not imply the expedient of the Medici, for the Medici themselves, as I saw very lucidly, consummation had always implied Florence. An hour had now come when, with the Papacy for the second time in the family, but with only an infant girl and two youthful bastards as the putative heirs of Cosimo, it might be wise to recognise that the uttermost had been accomplished. The Cardinal Giulio had not left the matter unconsidered, and, during the years he was in the archiepiscopal palazzo, he had discussed it with several of those who led opinion in the city; and he had commissioned messer Niccolò Machiavelli to prepare a discourse which recommended some reforms and suggested that the supremacy of the Medici should only be continued throughout the lifetime of Pope Leo and of the

Cardinal himself. That Giulio de' Medici, as Pope in Rome, came to another decision was declared to be the result of suggestions made to him by the Florentine ambassadors sent to congratulate him on his election: but I, knowing from my experience how such suggestions are intrigued, was positive that not only was the Pope very conscious of the ambitions of the younger branch of the family (and more especially of those of the lord Giovanni of the Black Bands), but that it was straining expectation to suppose that he would make a triumph even remotely possible for the lady Lucrezia Salviati and the lady Clarice Strozzi, who never forgot that they were daughter and granddaughter of the great Lorenzo, and that they had sons. I was confirmed in this judgment when Paola told me casually one morning in April (1524) that a courier had arrived from Rome, and, in an hour's time, donna Antonia came with uplifted hands to say that the state apartments were to be made ready for the Cardinal Passerini and the young lord Ippolito.

I helped donna Antonia in her bewildered indecisions about the chambers, and messer Ottaviano was to and fro, and plainly as much astonished as ourselves that Ippolito was to have his separate household and that on no niggardly scale: very precise directions had arrived from Rome about it all, and bales of purple cloth were rolled along the arched passage to the room where tailors worked day and night at the making of liveries. Gardeners were busy, too, at weeding and clipping, and the little enclosed garden beyond the courtyard, on which the windows of the gallery looked down, was made spruce for the first time in my knowledge of it: while the basins of the fountains in the garden on the north of the palazzo had a cleansing long sorely needed.<sup>14</sup> I had my own contribution towards this renaissance, and donna Antonia was entranced when I solved the problem of hangings for Ippolito's bed by some curtains of green silk woven with a design of velvet, and which I had decorated with raised borders of coloured stitchery. It was a recognised jest that she had a predilection for Ippolito: she was enlivened at the turn events had taken, adopted all suggestions as her own, and, when we had finished with them, I doubted if any prince in Europe had rooms so tastefully embellished. So goodly were they, indeed, that messer Ottaviano became conscious that those prepared for the Cardinal Passerini fell behind them in interest.

The preparations did not lack for critics. Even Cardinal Ridolfi, who had been appointed Archbishop of Florence by his Holiness, was among

the relatives who made an opportunity to inspect the palazzo, and somehow it was ordained among them that there should be rather greater magnificence for Caterina herself. And I had of course no choice but acquiescence when I found that I was to add two young ladies-in-waiting to my cares, and that the serenity of Paola was to be upset by the overlooking of extra serving-maids. We had hardly accommodated our tempers to these changes, when we learned in May that the Cardinal Passerini da Cortona was within a few days' journey of the city, and that the household of Caterina was to go to Poggio a Caiano before his coming. He came alone, and I suppose it had been deemed more prudent that he should be given time to establish his authority as the viceroy of his Holiness before the city was required to welcome the lord Ippolito. Even in June when, to my dismay, Alessandro was sent to the villa Reale, Ippolito did not travel north with him.

Alessandro arrived among us at Poggio a Caiano under the care of Monsignor Giberti, now datary in S. Pietro, and who was proceeding to Lombardy where the armies of the emperor and of France were pitted against one another. The party had slept on the previous evening at the Certosa in the Val d'Ema, and I learned that many gentlemen of Florence had ridden out there, and had made an escort for some little way on the road, in order to do honour to the Pope's young kinsman.

Monsignor remained at the villa for several days, partly to get some needful alleviation from the heat and fatigue of travelling, and partly I think to satisfy himself that this location had been wisely chosen for Alessandro. He was not minded, at the first, to discuss the matter with me, but I think he saw that I was in a position of some responsibility backed by no real authority. He confessed that it had been found needful to separate the two boys, and I gained the impression that the one had attempted the life of the other. Alessandro, so I divined from the carefully chosen expressions, had been discreditable in conduct in Rome, and that it had not been possible to prevent open scandal. It had been suggested to establish him at Careggi, but that was felt to be too near to Florence: in effect, I realised that I was asked to make the best of matters for the time being, and I was assured that the tutor, messer Giovanni Corsi, was not without parts and authority. This conversation took place in a room that had been set aside for Monsignor and his secretary, and to which I was summoned. He was surrounded with papers, and evidently put aside more pregnant occupations to speak with me. Couriers were to and fro, and I supposed all the inveterate papal business of trading in policies, which had made me so often wonder if

the whole context of things was not at enmity with the soul of man, entangling him in ambiguities and leaving him with neither loyalties nor aspirations.

It was not until the middle of August that Ippolito himself left Rome, accompanied by messer Galeotto de' Medici, the Florentine envoy to the papal court, and who was returned to Florence as his tutor. An imposing body of halberdiers, with the Medici pennants of purple and white on their pikes, escorted them.

I have kept, among the others which he has written to me from time to time, a letter from Monsignor Bembo which bears the date of the 11th day of the month of August in the year of our Lord 1524, and which was brought to me from Rome by messer Galeotto. Pietro Bembo's friendship for me always survived the long silences between us, broken sometimes by one and sometimes by the other. I think on this occasion I must have written to him earlier in the year, making the new election and my anxieties about Ippolito my topics, for what he says seems to be in answer to questioning, and thus:

Believe me when I say to you that Giulio de' Medici will be the greatest and wisest Pope whom the Church has known for many centuries. He is an accomplished noble with an unrivalled intellect, and I know him to be sincere in his desire to purge the Church, and to possess the statesmanship, as well as the piety which that task calls for. He will succeed where his late Holiness would always have failed, even had longer life been granted him. None whom I have met, who saw and spoke with him, has ought but reverence for Pope Adrian, and I realise him as one in whom goodness and sincerity were fundamental; but to have given Rome a Pontiff of so little worldly experience, and, moreover, of a northern austerity, was a miscarriage of judgment; even had circumstances themselves lent him furtherance, his lofty hopes for the purification of religion were destined to failure because of his own personality; and for circumstances he had a bankrupt exchequer, a city ravaged by plague, and no organisation available through which his plans might have been carried out. My pride as an Italian makes me grieve that anyone from an uncivilised nation should have discovered our glorious Rome and S. Pietro in such a plight.

But now all that is forgotten, and a new era has begun. It may not be known to you that our beloved Jacopo Sadoletto is back in his villa on the Quirinale. It is from there I write to you, rejoicing to be for a season again in Rome, at the centre of the world's affairs, and among so many friends of the cheerful past. I would not have you suppose Rome as we knew it to be unrecognisable, but the fact that his Excellency of Carpentras has his old position

in S. Pietro, and that his Holiness has called to his inner counsels Monsignori Giberti and Schömborg, is hostage to a certainty of wise reforms. I must not weary you by telling of all the projects for renewal of holiness of life which come to my ears. And there is further proof how favourably all things are in train. For the sake of all Europe it is of the first importance that his Holiness should be represented at the court of the emperor by someone of unassailable integrity, and one who cannot fail to be a *persona grata*; and you will share my satisfaction that this nuncio is to be our old friend, that great gentleman Baldassare Castiglione. The lord Marquis of Mantua has consented to waive his claim to his services, and he leaves for Spain at the end of the year, going first to Mantua to take leave of his mother and his young children. The plague in Rome seems to have abated, and I feel altogether a confidence in the future to which I have long been a stranger.

And now I would write to you of the young lord Ippolito de' Medici who goes to Florence in state this week. You know the love I had for him in those days of his childhood in S. Pietro, and if I have any hope for the mercy of heaven, it is perhaps in part because Bernardo Dovitzi and I made his virgin intelligence our care, and did our incompetent best to preserve the mirror of his mind from tarnish. Nevertheless it was impossible not to keep in view that a princely destiny might await him, and that if a prince is taught merely to be sober, chaste, and pious, much has been done for him, but little for his state. A prince must love his own glory if he is ever to love his people, and I do not deny that we encouraged the young Ippolito in a confidence that the world was his, and taught him that it is the graces which transform life. Moreover to love his people is not enough: the prince should know his people, and in his youth he should become familiar with men of all characters and in all ranks of life. If he is to do that it is hardly possible to keep him from contact with evil; it is only possible to teach him that evil is irrelevant.

The death of Pope Leo had seemed to me to be the end of all hopes of Florence for Ippolito, because, believe me, that Pope Clement has a strange and ineradicable affection for his own ill-begotten son. That it is Ippolito, after all, who is to be set up as Magnifico is, I conjecture, because his Holiness has recognised that in Florence his prerogative has its limitations, and that the mongrel Alessandro, without an army at his back, could never be established there. Joyous and beauteous youth casts a spell, and men give it worship crowning it with imagination. I have been to supper with his Holiness at the villa on monte Mario and the two boys there with him; Ippolito has ridden here to visit me in the cool of the evening, and I have encountered him elsewhere. I recognise his young attitude to life to be what that of the noble should be, but usually is not—an ecstasy which is natural and not stimulated. It is this which gives him glamour like the quivering radiance of summer, and you will wonder if, like the heat of summer, it may not, at any moment, be swept away by one day of storm. But have we not always—you and I—wasted a large part of our lives in fearing things which have never come to pass?

Ippolito and his escort slept on the night of the twenty-ninth day of August at the Certosa, as Alessandro had done before him, and again a large mounted company of the Palleschi<sup>15</sup> rode out to meet the Medici, and to accompany him back to the city. I had all the detail because Ippolito, ever ready from an early age to expend vitality on pen and paper, wrote two or three days later to Caterina in his sprawling handwriting and sent the letter by horseman to the villa. This was the first letter that Caterina had ever received from him, and I could not but be entertained when the child recovered it with insistence from my keeping, and locked it into an ivory and jade casket which had belonged to her mother the lady Maddelena de la Tour d'Auvergne.

Ippolito told that messer Ottaviano had procured him for his entry a black mare with a white fetlock that was perfect in its paces, and that he himself had chosen in Rome for the occasion a raiment of cherry colour and gold to harmonise with a brooch of rubies and pearls which his Holiness had given him for his cap. All the company, said the boy, were in noble attire, and when he crossed the ponte Vecchio and rode right through the city to the church of the Santissima Annunziata, it was with Luigi della Stufa, puffing in a yellow damask jerkin, on his right hand, and Alessandro Puccioni, sweating under a hat with green plumes, on his left; while Piero Ridolfi, Pietro Ruccellai, and many others followed behind, all as finely clad as they knew how: it was the morning hour before the great heat of the day, and the streets were full, and the cry of *Palle* everywhere. The Mass at SS. Annunziata had seemed unduly long, he wrote, for the church was crowded to suffocation and he was very thirsty, and must be on his knees most of the time with his offering of red roses for the shrine in his hand,<sup>16</sup> and the full purse his Holiness had entrusted to him dangling from his wrist for all to behold. But they were all mounted again and attained to the via Larga at last, and here dinner was laid in the great dining chamber for the company, and it was all very agreeable, although it would have been merrier without the Cardinal da Cortona at the other end of the table. Did Caterina know that he was now to be addressed as *MAGNIFICO*, Ippolito asked: Donna Antonia must have been practising the courtesy she made him for a month, and he had given her a smacking kiss on both cheeks.

*There is the Glory that is of pride, and the Glory that is of grace:*—I remember the Fra Sadoletto saying that very quietly once as he stood behind a circle seated on stools close round the fire in the great hall at Urbino. Pietro Bembo and I were roasting chestnuts in the ashes and distributing them to the company, and the lord Pietro was employing



his tongue in demonstration that man is only complete and upstanding when he would be more than man; that one should take no heed of what one is, for the urgent thing is what one will be. The nearer glory is to men, he avowed, the more they want it and feel its reality.

The summer (1524) at Poggio a Caiano was one of considerable infelicity. Madonna Aurelia and madonna Giovanna, who were respectively of the Pazzi and Soderini families, were youthful, and had lively spirits, and I had devised what small pastimes I could for them. Alessandro was now thirteen years of age, and they should have been captivating companions for him: they liked to ride in the cool evenings, had some skill in shooting at a target, played battledore and shuttlecock with zest, and when dusk came were always ready for dancing or for some mummery. But Alessandro would have none of any of it. After supper he would evade us all, and it was in the tavern in the village, or with the grooms in the stable, that messer Corsi would perhaps make discovery of him: but saying to me at last that it was useless to hound or reason with him, for he was too old now to be compelled, and that he was irreclaimably vicious. And I, feeling this actually to be so, was not greatly inclined to exercise discipline in the matter of Caterina. She no longer expressed herself in pantomime but in definite words; and I knew them to be the unseemly words that Aurelia and Giovanna themselves longed, but did not venture, to use. They were in communication with their families in Florence, and I am confident that they wrote how it all was, for, in October, a summons came to take Caterina back to the via Larga. I had feared that we were doomed to spend the winter in the villa, and was not sorry that strings had been pulled without intervention of mine.

We set out after dinner on a fair autumn day spare of colour. The dim undulations of the distant mountains, the pale gold of the chestnut woods, the brown villages and the withered vineyards had a benignity, seemed to extend tolerance to our gay cavalcade as it moved along to the sound of the girls' laughter. I rode at first with the indolent detached mood of the onlooker, and then I sought to ignore fatigue by speculating on problems of administration for the coming winter. Would it be the Cardinal Passerini, or the Cardinal Ridolfi, I wondered, whom I must consult about the tuition which Caterina should now have? She was of precocious intelligence, and had unchildlike powers of diligence,

and the struggle of learning to read and write was over. She ought, I believed, to have her first lessons in Greek, or, perhaps, as was now the fashion in Rome, in Hebrew. The whole of education must, indeed, be envisaged: there was, for instance, the use of musical instruments, in which, as a Medici, she would be expected to excel: I had already begun to give her some instruction in the art of the needle,<sup>17</sup> and, as far as in me lay, in things of heavenly import, and in the schooling of leisure. It was all to be for her, as for every child, an inscrutable reckoning with unforeseen fortune: my mind ranged here and there—and then there was, on a sudden, Ippolito before my eyes, emerged from the middle of a cloud of dust.

I had closed my mind to thoughts of him all the summer, and to behold him was an awakening to a fresh initiation. Visibly older, and dressed from head to foot in scarlet, he bestrode a black mare with a white fetlock, and an army seemed to be in his wake, so great was the clatter of accoutrements as the escort came to a halt. He swung from the saddle and was beside Caterina cap in hand. It was eruptive: as if a flame had sprung up suddenly in our midst. Caterina was trying to struggle to her feet in the pannier which held her, and I had to ride forward with behests to her.

Ippolito had scant notice to bestow on his cousin's ladies, and this I recognised as part of the game of prince and princess in which we were all expected to join. We moved forward again presently with the pomp we had hitherto lacked. He paced his mare alongside Caterina's mule, and I summoned Aurelia and Giovanna to places on either side of myself behind them, while ahead, and to the rear, trailed the joint retinue. The walls and towers of the city were in sight, flooded by the reflection of the western sky, and I hardened myself to encounter whatever this prank might bring on us as we made our way through the streets.

Pope Clement had decreed that the citizens should hail this bastard of the Medici as Magnifico, and it was easy to see that Ippolito was playing the part with all zest, but I knew that there was everything to make for dissatisfaction in Florence. The election of the Cardinal Giulio to the Papacy had not stirred the city to the exuberant glee it had exhibited at the time of the election of Cardinal Giovanni. The policy of Pope Leo had been, in the main, Spanish and imperial, while the Florentine tradition had forever been French, and it was this that had made the marriages of the lord Giuliano and the lord Lorenzo so popular. Since then Florence had been included in every treaty with the emperor as if it were an appendage of the Papacy, and there had been deep resentment, now

the more embittered because of the knowledge that Pope Clement owed his election to his reputation as an imperialist. Moreover there were all those matters of finance which ever stirred Florentine passion, and although the hopes of everyone were again raised by the opportunities for gain which the new election promised, yet the city had been laid under a heavy tax to pay for the war with Urbino, and the banks were still struggling with the difficulties of Pope Leo's defalcations. Above all I was conscious of the late executions and sentences of banishment which had involved so many important families; for after Cardinal Soderini, plotting in Rome, was discovered to be in league with the learned Society of the Orti Oricellarii which met in the gardens of the palazzo Rucellai, there had been many arrests; and after the Cardinal Giulio had been summoned to Rome by Pope Adrian there was a long trial and one of the Diacceto family and others confessed to a plot to murder him. All this was in my mind as I entered with deep misgiving under the archway of the porta del Prato.

But my fears were founded on ignorance of the sorcery of youth and joyousness in the saddle. Nothing but smiling faces looked out from under the arched recesses below the windowed walls, where work benches were set, or goods displayed for selling. There were only smiles on the countenances of those who stood still to watch our jangling progress in the wider thoroughfares, and Ippolito cap in hand most of the time, and exchanging laughter, and here and there a merry jest. And so, along streets that confused me, we came out among the booths in the piazza San Lorenzo where the folk buying and selling surged round us, and with us up to the gates of the little garden in the via Ginori. These were wide open with sentries beside them, and within them a display of household ceremonial which took me unawares. I was a little giddy and dazed after the long ride, but I found that I had ranged Aurelia and Giovanna automatically on either side of me, as, with I know not what superfluity of encompassing humanity, we climbed the staircase in procession behind Ippolito and Caterina hand in hand. Caterina was tumbling constantly over her skirt, and I knew that the demure swaying of the slight bodies of the girls beside me betokened their amused mockery at it all. Donna Antonia, splendid in a new purple gown with sleeves of pink broccatello, greeted us on the threshold of our old rooms.

I was swift to persuade Ippolito of our fatigue and when he had left us, and Paola would undress her for bed, the child Caterina, overstimulated and tired out, became intractable. Her frenzied screams called me from my own room, and I stood wondering what was to be

done. She had scratched poor Paola's face with passionate deliberation; it was such a delirium of naughtiness that a whipping would have been useless. I crossed the floor, and with a dexterous effort had her under my arm and was carrying her away before realisation of what had befallen came to her. She was heavy, but I had sufficient vigour to toss her into my bed which I commanded my tiring-maid to uncover. The surprise brought a spasmodic cessation of her din and struggles, we tucked the coverings tightly round her, and there she lay in astonishing quietude, and my triumph hardly credible. I have always kept the odd memory of that hour. A fire had been lighted on my hearth, and I sat beside it with a bowl of herb broth while my hair was unplaited and combed. The chestnut wood logs were dry, and the cheerful flames illumined all the room and cast the shadow of the bed canopy on the figured hangings of the farther wall. Presently I looked round, and it was very difficult not to laugh outright when I saw over the edge of the silken sheet a little arched nose and, on either side of it, protuberant little eyes which were watching me fixedly and warily. I wondered whether I ought to make the child get out of bed and kneel at her prayers, but when I went to the bedside presently she was in a deep slumber, and I lay down beside her in thankfulness that I was able to slumber too.

During the three years which followed this lucid day Ippolito grew to a lithe and active maturity of seventeen years of age, and Caterina became a circumspect and intelligent girl of eight, with the good spirits of health, and with more promise of comeliness than had once seemed possible. They were buoyant years for both, but the stars that know of destiny were in the sky above them, and, when they were over, the card castle of their young inexperience lay collapsed at their feet in the midst of their world in ruins.

Wisdom represents, I suppose, our least feeble conception of what God may be. But the last thing we can conceive of the great Maker of the Universe is that he looks wise. That was the prerogative of the Cardinal Passerini. A little laughter always convulses me when I remember that owl-like countenance. The owl, however, has always had its impressiveness for the multitude, and I think that, at first at all events, Florence was not unwilling to believe itself under the protection of Minerva. But myself, in the first moment I had seen his Eminence da

Cortona, had known with as much certainty as if I was a prophet of old that all the Pope's appreciations, all his knowledge of public affairs, and all his prudence availed nothing when his imagination was sterile enough to betray him by the appointment in Florence of a commissary such as this. I watched the growth of disillusion, and, after the first year, I became aware that small bodies of soldiers were being sent by Pope Clement from time to time from Rome to augment the garrison, and at last there were 2000 Medicean troops quartered in the city. The city was ripe for upheaval long before upheaval came. It is useless for me to deny to myself that Ippolito in all this was not to some extent his own undoing, but it was part of the Cardinal's failure that his young arrogance was not curbed; that decisions the older man was so long in making were invariably forestalled by the younger. Messer Paolo Giovio has written<sup>18</sup> that the Cardinal by tardy counsels aimed at acquiring a name for foolish gravity, and I can see too that there was in him that fear of being made a dupe which is an attribute of dullness, and which gave him as great a distrust of the discretions of the well-intentioned as he had of the artifices of the malcontents.

Ippolito, at the instance of the Pope himself, had been made a member of the *Balia* and of other bodies belonging to the constitution of the government. That seemed to me ill-conceived at his age, and it inspired him to assumptions for which neither time nor himself was ripe. Yet regret for those audacious years would be an hypocrisy. I used to look at the pageant of the Medici painted in glowing colours on the walls of the chapel at the top of the great stair in the palazzo;<sup>19</sup> and in that calm and proud procession I always beheld in vision the added figure of Ippolito, riding more intrepidly than any there, and dressed (because memory loves him best so) in tan-coloured velvet with plumes in his hat. He had brought with him from Rome a wardrobe that represented so much spending that I scarcely wondered that the lady Clarice and others were angry. I often advised him quietly that splendour was only for the rare occasion, but I had a perfect understanding of all it means to the spirit of youth to be enabled to make outward things the emblem of the heart's desire, and that perfect loyalty to what is noble and fine can often be endangered by a surface ingloriousness. And I was proud of his disposition in all matters of taste. A cloak of violet cloth lined with silver-grey damask, a surcoat of blue velvet lined with ermine, another of green satin closely woven with discs of gold thread and trimmed with miniver, a yellow jerkin with a pattern of stitched cord, a jacket of pale rose satin edged with silver lace—all

these, with other rich apparel, return to my remembrance together with a certain hat of white beaver caught up with a brooch of topazes, and a cap of cloth of gold aslant on the dark curls. He was often exquisite; vibrant but never over-exuberant, more pleased with life than with himself I think, and yet not having a complete confidence in life. For I would sometimes glimpse a dark, odd look, his face alight with the intentness of an eavesdropper unable to resist a deep desire to hear, yet with a latent distrust of the secret he would surprise.

But I was really aware of his life and being rather than in much actual contact with it, for Caterina and her little household had a separate and secluded existence in the palazzo; and indeed, that we were maintained there at all was, I surmise, only because of the determination of the ladies of the Medici: his Holiness, I know, had suggested the removal of Caterina to the Salviati or the Strozzi palazzi, but this guardianship, once so desired, both by the lady Lucrezia and the lady Clarice, was now rejected by them both, because they were of one mind that this child born in wedlock should not be dispossessed by the bastard: I learning too for the first time that the lady Emilia Pio had let it abroad in Rome that she doubted if Ippolito was the son of the lord Giuliano at all. So there was this family antagonism which Ippolito must reckon with, as well as that of the faction within the city who were by tradition in opposition to the Medici. And it was told me that the old supporters of the Medici (Palleschi) were growing as dissatisfied as any, for they had always claimed certain rights in the partition of offices and the assessment of taxation, and now Cardinal Passerini was keeping everything in his own hands. All the councils were now held in the great chamber of the palazzo Medici; and it had come about that Ippolito, with some of his gentlemen around him, should always be found in the smaller presence chamber standing under the picture of Pope Leo, and that here all must uncover to him. It was a triumph of his ability to make his young imperiousness prevail, but it was a triumph full of jeopardy; and to me evidence that the Cardinal was finding it more difficult to govern one youth than to govern a whole city.

There was this nucleus of displeasure; but youth triumphs because it so often seems perfectly right that it should do as it feels inclined without thinking too much about the consequences, and I believe that was the common sentiment about Ippolito, and that if he had not indulged in a few escapades, for instance, he would have been held to be neglecting the duties of his position. There was only laughter for the tales of his pranks, when escaped from the via Larga he would join those of his

own age in the time-honoured devices for getting into mischief; and only smiles for the already inevitable legends about himself and lovely ladies of the city. The only person who was never amused was the Cardinal, and that made me sensible that the prudence of its elders can be more compromising to youth than its own recklessness. But I was sensible too, of course, of the peril of it all, and the fundamental danger that the central fires of thought and will may change into the smoke of dream and desire, never to return to the heart of the fire again: this the outcome of all extravagance, and the inhibition of noble manhood. I had no lesser conception than that of noble manhood for my son. Messer Ottaviano found me one day in the presence chamber looking at the portrait of the lord Giuliano by Raffaello Sanzi<sup>20</sup> which had recently arrived with other pictures from Rome. The Cardinal, with Ippolito and most of the household, had gone away into the Mugello for hunting and I had taken the opportunity of the emptiness and quietude of the palazzo to make a tour of inspection. I said indifferently to messer Ottaviano as he stood beside me that the son was growing up with a strong resemblance to the father, and he agreed that this was so as regarded features, but not at all as regarded character. It had been impossible not to love the lord Giuliano for his sympathetic nature and magnanimity, he mumbled, but the lord Ippolito had the royal mind. I left the subject there, for I was careful never to discuss Ippolito with anyone, but I have often wondered if it were possible that this good-natured functionary thought of royalty of mind as including the conception of goodness and purpose, of knowledge, reason, and restraint.

Love of knowledge had been so much part of the atmosphere Ippolito had been surrounded with from early childhood that I must not perhaps count it to him for righteousness. His studies, as well as those of the duchessina and Alessandro, were under the direction of the Cardinal Ridolfi, and his tutors were multifarious, and if there was no apparent diligence it is at least fact that in later days he had the repute of a scholar and a poet. His skill in music was inherited too, and I used to think that if his parentage could possibly be doubted, that, at least, would prove him to be of Medici blood. He possessed many of the musical instruments which had belonged to his father, and among them a lute of many memories. There were serene hours passed in what was now called the sala of the duchessina, when we would make a concert, I inviting one and another to join us. But I could not give Ippolito entire freedom to come and go, for the duchessina now had her tutors, too, whom she shared

with the two daughters of the lord Pier Francesco de' Medici<sup>21</sup> who had a house in the via Larga adjoining the palazzo. These young girls were named Laudomia and Maddelena, and were a little older than Caterina, and she was often sulky with a jealousy of their greater attainments, and more especially of the lively terms on which they and their brother Lorenzo were with Ippolito. There were the Strozzi cousins as well, and indeed many of kin about the same age, and a certain rivalry among the families in providing diversion, so that it all needed some ordering. Madonna Aurelia had been given in marriage into the Soderini family, and had not been replaced, but madonna Giovanna was now sufficiently tutored, and I would send her alone in attendance on Caterina to the gatherings in these palazzi of Florence where the children sometimes danced and played games, and sometimes invented little masques. Ippolito could no longer be ranked as a child, but he often joined in these diversions, and especially in the picnics on sunny days on the hill slopes or on the banks of the river outside the city, enjoying himself as much as any. It was right that youth should have gaiety, but hooded torchbearers were in the streets every day and all day long in all these years; for the plague from Rome had travelled northwards, and its toll in the city was a heavy one.

It was now and again attempted to bring Alessandro from Poggio a Caiano to share in all the pleasuring, and this especially at the times of the festivals of the Church; but it was impossible to command mannerliness towards him from any of his own generation. No strictures nor punishment could prevail with Caterina, and the others were as ill-behaved as their courage served them. I was always swayed between compassion and repugnance for the unhappy boy whom nature seemed to have deprived of even the meanest of her gifts: he could not as much as pretend to propriety, this showing itself one day when, snow having fallen, Ippolito came to ask if madonna Giovanna might bring Caterina to join the sport of snow-balling in the garden. I watched them all from the open window, and saw presently that Alessandro had chosen the little Laudomia for assault. The child was gallantly trying to retaliate, but at last she turned and fled, and he in pursuit, both disappearing behind the bushes. In a minute or two came piercing shrieks, and Ippolito and Lorenzino, needing no prompting, ran swiftly. Ippolito returned carrying poor Laudomia, she drenched with snow and weeping bitterly: he called to me that she had hurt her foot and could not



stand, and he bore her into her own home which overlooked the garden. Returning he stood beneath the window to tell me indignantly that they had found the child tumbled on the path, and Alessandro pelting her with snow with brutal force—he twice her age and size. I begged Ippolito earnestly to make no more of it, for I always feared some untoward outcome of the hatred between these two. But I learned from donna Antonia that evening that my entreaty had not availed, she telling me that Alessandro was in his bed and the physician called to him, and that the lord Ippolito was for some reason under the displeasure of the Cardinal who had asserted his authority and had forbidden a hawking party which had been planned for the next day.

I made no comment nor enquiry, when, on the following noon, Ippolito came to ask nonchalantly if I would care to go with him to the studio of Michelagnolo Buonorrotti Simoni at San Lorenzo. This was an excursion I had long desired, and I had supposed his promise to escort me there forgotten. I wrapped myself in a cloak lined with paunch, and before we crossed the piazza, still patched with snow, we stood looking at the unfinished church from the corner by the palazzo, Ippolito saying that if we found Michelagnolo in a fair temper he would try to persuade him to show us the plan which he had made for Pope Leo for the façade; it was, Ippolito declared, the stormiest of subjects, and the new mausoleum now roofed in was nothing less than cold rage about it all expressed in marble. I must be prepared to hear, he said, that the shameful brick frontage of the church, still standing there, was a degradation to the city and a monument to the ineptitude of the Medici family: and indeed poor Michelagnolo had been scurvily treated, for he had been kept for years at Carrara and Pietrasanta hunting for the suitable marbles to carry out his design and then Pope Leo had decided he could not afford it. And now the artist's fury was for Pope Clement, who had money to spend and was squandering it on this superfluous mausoleum, and on the library for the books which could, so he claimed, be as well housed in the Medici palazzo itself.

Messer Simoni did not say precisely any of this to me, but I realised that he had said it all, and was ready to say it again in and out of season. We found him, not in his studio, but in the church itself, standing at the end of the vista of grey pillars, his powerful feet planted apart by the side of the plain porphyry slab in front of the high altar under which Cosimo *Pater Patriæ* lay buried. He turned his head when Ippolito touched his elbow, and I saw a face incredibly furrowed and met a gaze of tragic implacability. He was only grim when he learned of my desire to see

his work, growling that he had raised a monument which, if it did not force its way into heaven, at least flaunted its desire to do so: and yet he had failed to give it the dignity expressed by this piece of pavement here with its simple design.

I know not what to say about this assertion. When we reached the new chapel I realised that it was, in its strange proportions, and in the disposal of its material what Ippolito had called it—an expression of cold rage; but it seemed to me a noble rage, and when the design was completed with its altar and all its statues and paintings,<sup>22</sup> I felt that it might be unequalled in beauty and interest. A great block of marble, roughly hewn, stood in the studio beyond, and while the sculptor strode moodily about, Ippolito told me that this was to be the memorial statue of his father, with the bâton of the Gonfalonier of the Church, and it was to have recumbent figures of Night and Day at its feet. I asked the wherefore of this rather timidly, and messer Buonorrotti smiled for the first time, and then burst into a hearty laugh, saying that no doubt they would be asking the same question five centuries hence, and finding no answer for it. I seemed for some reason to have summoned up his good humour, and he took us out into a yard where great blocks of coloured marbles lay. Here, said he, was part of the material for the façade to the church which he had hoped to make a mirror of beauty for all Italy: and did I know that this young Magnifico had audaciously promised him that if he would live a little longer he should yet achieve it. He took Ippolito by the ear, saying that he himself had once been young too and confident of what he would do with life: whereas of course we live to discover that what has really happened is what life has done to us. Ippolito recovered his countenance and his complexion, and retorted that of course we expect satisfaction from life, but if we do not get it, dreams were, after all, an enlivening alternative. Messer Buonorrotti had picked up some small chips and was throwing them absentmindedly at three lean cats who were wandering over his marbles, and he did not answer. Presently we followed him as he strolled back into the chapel and stood with his hands on his hips gazing up into the narrow, soaring dome. Life:—he said—our last verdict on it would have to be that it had been interesting but not in the least what we had wanted.

That hour seems in memory to be divided by no measurable interval from another of April weather when one of the pages came to me in the garden to say that the Cardinal desired my presence. As I walked through

his ante-chamber and his secretary's room I saw nothing but perturbed faces, and when I kissed his ring I found his hand to be trembling. He shuffled with some papers in front of him to cover his discomposure and told me that he would be glad if I could persuade myself and the rest of Caterina's household to make ready to start with her for Poggio a Caiano in two hours time, when an armed escort would accompany us. This was only a precaution, he explained, clearing his throat diligently as he proceeded: he did not think Florence to be in any real danger, but he had just received news that the imperial army had entered Florentine territory: he felt assured that its object was not Florence but Rome, and in any case the duke of Urbino with the Venetian troops and the marquis of Saluzzo were both marching to intercept it: all would be well, but a good many families were sending away their children: the Strozzi children had gone to the villa at Le Selve, and the lady Maria had started for Venice with her son. It might cause comment if the duchessina did not join the exodus—and in any case the plague was spreading in the city and it was better she should go if on that account alone. The Cardinal looked more like an owl than ever.

We left the palazzo presently without having had any glimpse of Ippolito; and I could not but feel, as the horses of our convoy pushed a way through them, that the temper of the crowded street was an ugly one.

I sent a letter back to Florence by the officer asking Ippolito to write to me.

History pretends to be an account of facts, but I ask myself what facts really are, and if they are more than personal opinions on precarious material? It is explicit that the historian always has some guiding interest to direct his intelligence, and when I seek to make a verdict for myself on all that ended in the foul catastrophe of the sack of Rome, I wonder if my interests are too narrow. For what stands out in my mind is that, but for the bribe of a proposed marriage for Caterina with a son of the king of France which Medici family ambition was unable to resist, Pope Clement might perchance have kept to the path of independence of both imperial and French policies. This matrimonial bait was first held out to him by the French ambassador in the year of our Lord 1524 and was, I understand, dangled anew at crucial intervals. That so terrible a result should arise from so insignificant a cause seems an incredibility of fortune; but the shrewdest man will lose his reputation

for a small indiscretion, and many a man has broken his leg walking about in his own chamber.

There were of course rival theories accounting for it all, and I name as the first, that while Monsignor Giberti was French in all his sympathies and ever alarmed at the world-wide power of Spain, Monsignor von Schömberg was unalterably for the emperor; and that his Holiness with his irresolution of nature was prone to be a prey to the conflicting counsels of his two secretaries. But Mgr Bembo, writing to me in after years, held that the tragedy was really rooted in Pope Clement's over-whelming dread of a general Council of the Church which was a project with the emperor Charles from the first, the mere rumour of it so depreciating all papal offices that no money was to be got for them. And it was on this account said Pietro Bembo that his Holiness sought by any means, however humiliating, to keep the emperor in a good humour, and, failing in that, would incline at once towards king Francis, hoping he would raise impediments to stave the Council off.

How vain are all suppositions after the worst has happened: and recital of events which lead step by step to disaster are vanity too. The papacy of Pope Clement began with the armies of France and the empire at war in Lombardy and the valley of the Po, and both sides angling for the papal support. The emperor's troops were under the lord duke of Bourbon. (This nobleman was nephew to our lady duchess Elisabetta, for his mother had been her sister the lady Chiara Gonzaga.) He was a great soldier who had become a rebel against his native country.<sup>23</sup> There were several campaigns, and the French had one general and another, but at length king Francis himself crossed the Alps, and although he entered Milan, he was defeated under the walls of Pavia and was taken prisoner and sent to Spain. Here, after twelve months of agreeable captivity, he signed the treaty of Madrid by which the emperor became all powerful, and the lord Castiglione seems to have foreseen that, this being so, the formation of a league against him was only a matter of time: and so it proved. Six months later the Holy League was signed at Cognac (May 22nd, 1526) between his Holiness, the most Christian King, king Henry of England, the state of Venice, and the Sforza. The war in Lombardy began again with the aid of papal troops, and Spanish envoys were sent to Rome to negotiate.

The story was told and retold to me afterwards by the lady Clarice, and although her passion did not serve to make her coherent, I apprehend that Don Ugo di Moncada the Spanish ambassador, finding negociation with S. Pietro difficult, had intrigued with the Colonna,

who were ever for the emperor. Colonna troops led by the lord Ascanio of Marino (the brother of the lady Vittoria), the lord Vespasiano of Pagliano, and the Cardinal Pompeo, entered Rome and overcame the Swiss Guard. The Pope escaped through the passage to the fortress of S. Angelo, and the soldiers plundered the palazzo S. Pietro, the sacristy of the church and many private houses; the Pope being the more sore about it all that he had considered the lord Vespasiano Colonna to be his friend. Don Ugo, now offering his services as mediator, was able to enforce that the papal troops should be withdrawn from Lombardy; and, on account of his relationship to his Holiness as well as because of his great wealth, he claimed the lord Filippo Strozzi (who was then in Rome) as a hostage and sent him forthwith to Naples. When this intelligence came to Florence, the rage of the lady Clarice knew no bounds, for she was certain that the Pope meant to ignore the treaty. She was again with child and had long been ailing, but she started for Rome at once.

The lord Filippo's life was in truth in peril, the Colonna soon demanding of the viceroy of Naples that he should be delivered over to them to be put to death. For his Holiness had gathered together an army, and this, going forth into all that great territory of the Colonna which lay between the lago Fucino and Tyrrhenian sea, had razed fourteen of their castles to the ground and done much of wrong and shame. That the Pope meant afterward to attack Naples itself there can be no doubt, but the troops promised by the king of France, and the money promised by king Henry of England did not come, and the duke of Bourbon was reported to be marching south with the imperial army. Out of it all came the topsy-turvy of another treaty. His Holiness was again the friend of the emperor, the lord Filippo Strozzi was set free, and the viceroy de Lannoy started north to stop the advance of the emperor's troops. He arrived in Florence on the sixth day of April in the year of our Lord 1527, being the day after I left the city with Caterina. He had ridden with incredible haste, but he was too late.

During that month of April at Poggio a Caiano we were not without intelligence of all that was happening in Florence, for a courier was constantly to and fro on behalf of Alessandro, whom I discovered to be in communication with Fabrizio Peregrino and others, and conversant with much that astonished me. I spoke on the matter to the tutor Giovanni Corsi, and he said it was a common mistake to disparage the acumen of those whom we dislike, and that hatred, the child of envy, was

an ungovernable stimulus. It had been the command of Pope Clement that both boys should write to him at regular seasons, and there was very little that Ippolito said or did, messer Corsi asserted, that Alessandro did not know about, and which did not ultimately come to the knowledge of his Holiness in a pernicious guise. It was not the noblest manner to make good a foothold, messer Corsi allowed, but what other weapon did this Alessandro possess; and the method bid fair to succeed, because Ippolito was too arrogantly unsuspecting. I returned, a little hotly, that, although his Holiness must naturally have a predilection for his own son, yet he was not stupid and must recognise guile; but messer Corsi said that, in this too, I showed a lack of knowledge of life. He had been, as I knew, with Alessandro to Rome the previous winter, and he had realised that men of great affairs for ever surround themselves in daily life with those whose first virtue is deference, life only being bearable, perhaps, if the clash and tension of affairs abroad is balanced by a subservience within doors. His Holiness was often a tired man, and Alessandro's watchful silence—a certain dog-like quality he possessed—was in his tutor's opinion all-ingratiating.

Alessandro was of course, like Ippolito, now grown to adolescence, and to a more vigorous appearance, and I often studied him curiously, for his likeness to Anna da Collo was very pronounced, and I recalled that she had been a mistress of craftiness. That a son of hers would be without ambitions was improbable, and Alessandro did not seek to conceal the satisfaction with which he was hearing of events in Florence from his informants. Meanwhile the days went by, and no letter came from Ippolito: but in the first week of May one of his own servants brought it, and I saw at a glance that it was immensely long, and that I should have difficulty perhaps in deciphering the script: I realised when I had come to an end of it that it had been written with an intensity of activity, the incidents lived over again with youthful exhilaration.

Honoured lady—I crave your forgiveness that I have not before this taken up my pen to obey the request which I had from you by the hand of Pietro Boni, but truth to tell the days have been overfull of event, and I, as you know, ever prone to put off until the morrow the task that is not urgent the day. I was amazed when the Cardinal told me that Caterina had gone from the palazzo. You and she are doubtless better out of the city, but the villa is but meagrely defended, and in my opinion I should have been informed.

On the morrow of your departure came the viceroy of Naples, and unheralded, as he had outridden most of his escort. He was very weary, but after supper he lost no time in laying before us the need for his haste. He is a

Netherlander, and he speaks our language haltingly, but he made it clear that if the imperial army could not be stayed, the fate of Florence would be that of Prato fifteen years ago. He spoke first of all of the lord duke of Bourbon, whom he said was a desperate man without a country, and with the sword now as his only means of fortune: and then he would have us understand about the army, and that it had been in Lombardy all this cruel winter, camped in swamps, and without pay, and all the country a desert from the continual wars, so that provisions had been hard to come by: he said it was a great host, and not only of Spaniards who were always devils, but of mercenaries from Germany who were the scum of the earth, and the lord Bourbon's only means of restraining them had been to promise the sack of Florence and of Rome when the snows were melted. He said that this brutish rabble was now across the mountains by way of the val di Bagno, as we knew. The viceroy had with him 20,000 ducats which was all his Holiness had been able to raise: his demand was that the city should give him 60,000 more, and, with this as an instalment of pay, it might be possible, he hoped, to stay the onward march. I then said out before them all that not only this, but it needed that the city should be strongly fortified as well.

But you know what the Cardinal is, and what the citizens are. I have been distraught. The argument was raised that the invaders were so weakened and disordered by all their hardships that they were not greatly to be feared, and that the lord duke of Urbino, with the Venetian troops and the lord marquiss of Saluzzo with French and Swiss were both marching to our aid. The Cardinal was almost lyrical over this, but nevertheless I found that the palazzo itself was being stacked with arms and munitions, and all the streets round it were kept full of our troops, so I apprehended that it was the enemy within the gates, and not the enemy without, which the Cardinal most feared, and this before I met the viceroy at the head of the stair one day, and he drew me into the chapel saying that he wished to be informed about the frescoes. He latched the door on us, and he did me honour saying that, young as I was in years, he felt me to be a man, and he asked me if I had any suspicion of plotting that was going on with the envoys who had arrived from the imperial army to interview himself. His face looked furrowed and anxious as he said that he was convinced of double dealing, and that a plan was afoot for a rising within the city to overthrow Medici rule directly the imperial army should be without the walls. He said that he suspected the Salviati family, and that there was communication with Filippo Strozzi in Rome as well. I then asked him what was the real mind of the emperor Charles himself in all this, and he looked round at me, a little astounded I think at my audacity, and fell into a silence, saying presently that the emperor was a good Catholic and of a true piety, and even if he were not, should harm come to the Sovereign Pontiff the conscience of all Europe would be aroused, and that his own task was therefore an unmistakable one. I asked him what he would have me do, saying that I felt myself to be very helpless, for the Cardinal thought me too presumptuous,

and that if I said black, he would at once decide on white. The viceroy laughed a little at this, saying that he had noted it, and that his object was rather to warn me of peril to myself. He asked me what friends I had, and I replied to him that, among men, I sometimes felt that I had in real truth none, except a few old friends of my father, who were scattered and without puissance to-day. I told him that I had often felt that it would have been easier for me to secure a standing for myself here in Florence than to play the part of Magnifico in a situation made for me by the prudence of others, saying that I saw in the streets and public places that I had the rough-and-ready goodwill of the populace, whereas, in the council chamber, I felt myself to be balancing on a structure of conventions that might splinter beneath me at any moment. The lord Lannoy said to this that a free and a fair field of action for our dealings with men and women was always the happiest, but the crowd itself was a thing formless and with blind motives and must ever be distrusted. Then he questioned me as to how I stood with his Holiness.

Perhaps I was incautious in what I said to this foreigner, but I felt in him a friendliness, and since you went away there is no one to whom I can speak in confidence. I believe that I stand but insecurely with his Holiness. If I am with him I can make him smile, and I have even made him laugh, and he will never ignore me as long as he sees that I have the consideration of others. If it did not seem absurd I would even say that he fears me a little, realising me to be unfettered. Much of this I tried to express to the Viceroy, saying at last that I sometimes felt myself to be a thing of hap without any place in reality; and he asked me with kindly hesitation if my birth, not being in wedlock as you may know, was ever made a matter of mortification to me by others. I think I was not wrong in returning no to this, but he looked curiously at me, and he advised me that for the present I did not go abroad without an armed bodyguard, and on foot not at all. And here I kiss your hands and lay down my pen, resuming it tomorrow if leisure avails, for there is yet much I would acquaint you with.

*(On the morrow being  
the 3rd day of May)*

The viceroy left the city on the next day after our conversation in the chapel: but this was not until the fifteenth day of April, the money he had asked for having been but tardily collected, although the imperial army was known to be drawing gradually nearer ravaging the peasantry as they came. I rode with the lord Lannoy beyond the walls, but he would not let me go far. It was a morning of sunshine, and as I returned through the city streets, ladies, fair and otherwise, were afoot returning from Mass, students tossed their caps at sight of me, tradesmen were about their business as usual, and messer Niccolò Capponi and other citizens whom I met on the way removed their headgear, and had no aspect of hostility. I felt a little shamefaced as I heard the clatter of hoofs on the flagstones behind me that I had listened to the



Fleming in the matter of a bodyguard. Yet that very afternoon there was a great tumult in the streets between our troops and the populace, one of the guard was slain, and a boy of the Gondi family was wounded. I learn with regret that he has since died.

It would seem that in past days there was always a militia for the defence of the city, composed of the citizens themselves, and the demand that it should be again raised and armed is universal. The Cardinal has ever declined to listen to this and I think that it has been a madness. I told the Cardinal Ridolfi and others so, and a public meeting was at length summoned in our palazzo for consultation on the matter. I myself was persuaded that all would now go well, for I seemed to be greeted with the same deference as usual in the presence chamber. But, when all were gathered, I was confounded to find Niccolò Capponi on his feet, he saying that such consultations should not take place in a private palazzo but in that of the Signoria which was the seat of the government. Moreover it was revealed that Luigi Guicciardini,<sup>24</sup> who was ill, or feigning to be so, had received in his chamber Piero Salviati and others, and had made promises that the militia should be raised. It was all a very great confusion of aims, and I felt my impotence to slash a way out of it all. There was a marriage feast in the palazzo of the Gherardesca who have given their red-haired niece, Gemma, to that lout Andrenolo Pandolfini; and messer Ottaviano came to me and advised that I did not stay away. Piero Salviati, Jacopo Alammani and all my other familiars greeted me there gaily, and, when darkness came, we went masked into the streets and had a merry time. But when I returned to the palazzo at a very late hour, I found that the guard had been doubled, and I was summoned to the Cardinal, who reproached me with great peevishness for my levity. The Cardinals Ridolfi and Cibo were with him, and all disturbed by the intelligence which had just come that the embassy of the viceroy had not availed; the 80,000 ducats he had with him being but a quarter of what the lord duke of Bourbon now said was necessary to pacify his troops. The lord viceroy sent word that he was too full of despair to return to Florence, and the enemy was now beyond Sta Sofia—I spare you the Cardinal's ineptitudes. The next day the streets were blocked with carts of the peasants coming within the walls for safety.

I make yet another beginning, writing this past midnight in my chamber, and feeling it to be a fact that the worst never happens, for 4 days after we had despaired, the Pope's troops from Romagna with the lieutenant-general Guicciardini reached the city and camped under the walls, and two days later the Venetian and French armies had approached to within 10 and 12 miles of us. Then of course the Cardinal did his best to make a botch of it all, and it will not be easy to tell the tale with brevity.

The Cardinal had word that the lord duke of Urbino, and the marquis of Saluzzo were in advance of their armies for the purpose of surveying the ground at Incisa, and that they were to meet one another at Castello. Without

explanation to any of the Signoria, the Cardinal decided to go forth at noon and greet them, (this being on the 26th day of April,) and with him he took myself, and the whole of our troops and their officers, excepting the palace guard. Hardly had we exchanged salutations with the lord duke and the lord marquis, and none of us as yet dismounted, when Nero Poggio, in pursuit of us, tumbled off his horse out of a cloud of dust at our feet, sweating and breathless, and with the fine news that rumours in Florence had magnified our excursion into a certainty that we had abandoned the city, that the great bell of the tower of the Signoria was ringing, and that all the citizens were in the piazza calling *popolo è libertà* as of old.

That we returned riding in all haste you may imagine, the lord duke and the lord marquis coming with us. We wondered if we should effect an entrance, but thanks to messer Ottaviano (as we learned later) the porta di Faenza was open, and as I entered under the archway I heard for the first time the clang-clang of the great bell. Do you remember that I once said to donna Antonia how much I longed to hear it, and her reply that it would be an evil hour for me when I did so? Not so, however; for the uprising was all over before nightfall.

We learned that the piazza of the Signoria and the streets around it were full of a seething mob, so the count Piero Nofri went forward with a thousand of the infantry, and as they came to the centre of the city they all fired into the air. This had an almost miraculous effect, the people melting away into their houses like butter in the sun, and when the troops entered the piazza the hundred or so remaining disappeared also—not a man was left. The Cardinal had forbidden me to go forward with count Piero, but I had escaped from his observation, and now there was the fun of an assault on the palazzo of the Signoria itself where all the leaders were said to be. We tried to prise the little door open with pikes, and a bonfire was lighted before the large one, but on a sudden came such a hail of great stone balls from the machicolations above that we were driven from the walls. I told the count that I remembered seeing these balls stacked together in the form of benches one day when I was on the roof of the palazzo, and that their use in old days had been explained to me. He returned answer that they seemed to be pretty useful in the present day too, and, even as he was speaking, one fell straight on to Michelagnolo Buonorrotti's statue of king David and broke off the left arm in two pieces. The bell was clanging all this time without ceasing.

It was then decided to send for artillery from our Medici palazzo and also for the Venetian troops from outside the walls, and we all withdrew out of the range of fire, for they had arquebuses in the palazzo and one of our men had been killed. But while we were waiting we saw the French captain Federigo da Bozzolo coming from the palazzo across the empty piazza towards us. This captain came to the city with the troops from Romagna, and he had made a great popularity for himself with all. He had ridden out with us in the morning, but had out-ridden us on the way back, and by some means had managed to make an entrance into the palazzo: he kept himself

out of sight during the fighting, so he told us, but when we withdrew he called up the stairs and offered to go forth and suggest terms. I may say that by the time he reached us, he had forgotten that he had been let forth in the guise of a peacemaker, and he was all for the fray: and indeed the clanging of the bell, which never stopped, and that impregnable look which, as you know, the palazzo itself has, were a great provocation. Peace seemed to be too tame an ending to it all.

The Cardinals and the generals had by now come up from the Faenza gate, and they were in the shop which is under the palazzo of the Cerchi; and here we brought the captain Federigo. The Cardinal Passerini was in a valiant mood, feeling no doubt that the odds were all on our side, but I could see perfectly that the lord duke and the lord marquis, who had not yet supped, were all for making an end of an affair which did not interest them: moreover it was evident that the general Guicciardini was thinking of the safety of his brother the Gonfalonier, and it was he, seated on a bench in the shop, who drew up terms offering a free pardon for surrender, and who sent the captain Federigo across the piazza Pubblica with them. It was now growing dusk. The captain came back presently saying that those in the palazzo thought the guarantee of the Cardinal not sufficient, and required that of the generals of the League as well. So we all repaired to the church of S. Michele in Orto, and there the sacristan brought candles and all the signatures were affixed. The general Guicciardini went himself to the palazzo this time with the paper, saying that he should order every body to go home and pledge his word that they would not be molested. So it was all over, the bell presently stopped its clanging, and the troops trailed away to their quarters, and we through the dark and quiet streets to the via Larga. I make a long tale of it all and must come to an end on yet another day for sleep overtakes me.

*(On the morrow, being  
the 4th day of May)*

Arrived back in our palazzo I found that mine own chambers had been prepared for the lord duke, and those with the ebony and ivory bed for the lord marquis; and their own gear not being with them, the good woman Antonia had provided all for their comfort, even to pelisses and shoes of soft leather to exchange for their riding attire. Your chamber had been allotted to myself and I was entertained to find, laid out for me there, that sapphire blue doublet with the gold chequered sleeves for which donna Antonia has so particular an admiration. The hour was late when we sat down together in the dining hall, and all very thankful to get to table. I was glad that the repast to crown this droll day proved adequate, and we gorged with accumulating satisfaction on truffles fried with eggs and cheese, on eels that had come that day from Pisa and which were stewed in a new way with olives and red chianti, and on a saddle of pork served with beans and a sweet sauce, and with what not to follow. I never enjoyed a meal so much I think, and mine not

the only satisfied countenance at the board; and our talk of all the doings of the day, m<sup>sr</sup> Ottaviano, in especial, full of the tale of what had happened when we left the city.

Our departure had been, he said, of course a matter of shrill speculation with the idlers who are standing about at all times in the piazza Publico and the mercato Nuovo. The crowds grew, then some cap-maker had a quarrel with a customer over his price and there was a scene; panic began to spread, shop-keepers put to their doors, people came running, and soon half the population was in the piazza and the streets round it. Then may it please you, it being now afternoon, there was the sound of drums, and over the ponte Vecchio, with Piero Salviati at their head, came four or five hundred of the young blades of the city. They were armed, said messer Ottaviano, they all wore devices, they marched in step and had a martial bearing. They forced their way through to the ringhiera<sup>25</sup> and presently the Gonfalonier came out to them. What he said in way of expostulation was drowned in the hub-bub, and when he turned they pressed in after him, carrying him with them upstairs to the council chamber. Here they caused the Signoria to assemble, they insisted on a proposal to banish the Medici, they insisted on the ballot, they shouted with glee when the beans in the box were declared to be all black, and then they would have all the Signoria come down to the ringhiera where the result was proclaimed to the sound of trumpets. After this Piero demanded the keys of the belfry and set the great bell going, the armoury was seized and arms distributed, and all the prisoners in the Bargello were set free. I could not help envying Piero Salviati as I sat there and listened, and thought of the diversion all this brable must have been. I mean to take the first opportunity to be vexatious and ask him where he and his army were when the captain Federigo fired his salvoes.

After the supper was over the lord duke of Urbino engaged me in talk, and he spoke of my father, and told me that the rooms he had occupied in the palazzo at Urbino were still kept with the same furnishings; and the lord duke was gracious enough to say that he hoped one day to see me installed in them as his guest. When I spoke of this afterwards to the Cardinal Ridolfi he only laughed, saying that it was said after supper; and that he feared the real truth to be that the duke Federigo would never forget that the Medici had deprived him of his state, and that he doubted if he was going to exert himself very actively either to defend our city from the Bourbon or to lend succour to Rome itself.

His Eminence Ridolfi is always like that, is he not; in any case his forebodings were waste of breath. The two commanders left in the early morning to rejoin their armies, and in the afternoon came a messenger to say that they were returning to Florence. They rode into the courtyard before nightfall and announced that a miracle had happened, and that the imperial army had struck its camp at Figliino at dawn, had turned its back on the city and was now marching straight for Siena. There are those who say that the failure of

the uprising within the walls on the previous day was the reason of this, and that there has been a plot as the viceroy had suspected. I know not, and I do not feel to care. All is well, and all our troubles are over. The Gonfalonier and all the Signoria have been here to excuse themselves, and as for Piero Salviati, he spends his days in the ante-chamber of the Cardinal, who has not yet condescended to see him. A treaty has been signed with the generals, Florence has become a member of the League, a great review of all the troops has been held, and four days ago on the first day of the month, the French and Venetian armies and the papal troops came straight through the city to the porta Romana making a brave show. They are now well on their way in the pursuit of the enemy. I did my best to persuade the Cardinal to let me go with them but it was of no avail.

It is at present any thing but gay here as you can conceive. A new Signoria has been elected with Francesco Nori as Gonfalonier, and there are pickets in the streets and proclamations and much dreary business. I have decided that when I come to legal age I shall take the palazzo of the Signoria for mine own dwelling. This Medici palazzo is after all but a citizen's house, and is rivalled by that of the Strozzi and others. I thought to myself as I stood looking at the palazzo Publico while we were waiting for the guns and for more troops, how nobly it stands in the very heart of the city, and that the Medici will never be really respected until they make it their abode.<sup>26</sup> Ask Caterina from me if she would like to live there. I reflected moreover in that same hour that there will always be risings against authority in this city, for it has always been so; and that it is not enough to acquire the use of arms if one knows nought of the art of war. Florence shall have its own army—I am of one accord with Piero Salviati there—and I myself will be its general. It is I hold a shameful thing that Rome and his Holiness should be in peril and not a finger in all Tuscany raised in defence. Not that I doubt but the peril will be averted, and I have planned to ride to the villa and bring you good news myself when it arrives, for you and Caterina will not now I suppose return until the heat is over. The Cardinal means to go to Careggi very soon, and Alessandro is to join us there he says, the which will be more pleasing to Caterina and yourself than it will be to me.

What I have written is now a volume in bulk and length, but I am anxious to acquaint you with all, for I know that you will otherwise be very inaccurately informed: and even now I find that I have omitted to say to you that the lord duke of Urbino mentioned you to me, saying that he remembered you well of old in the court of Urbino, and asking after your welfare. He told me of the death of the duchess Elisabetta a year ago after much suffering.

Greet Caterina for me and say that when I come I expect to find that she has grown in all virtue and knowledge.

Recommending myself to your orisons

IPPOLITO DE' MEDICI.

This letter was brought to me at Poggio a Caiano on the 5th day of the month of May in the year of our Lord 1527, and by the time it reached me, so we learned a week later, Rome was enduring every outrage, and his Holiness had again taken refuge in the fortress of San Angelo. I was stirred by all Ippolito had told me, and by his confidence in my understanding; but I was full of misgiving too. It had been a day of unusual warmth for the time of year, and I remember how I went out on to the terrace that evening in the moonlight, and that when I laid my hands on the balustrade I found the stone still retained the heat of the sun. The moon, big and round, was climbing the sky over the mountains and covered all the heaven with light. I could see the colours of the oleanders, and the brown filmy moths that were humming among their flowers. There was no silence in the night, only a sense of sound suppressed; and standing very still, I could be certain of strange shufflings like muffled footsteps on the gravel below. Did the Magnifico, Lorenzo, the builder of this villa, walk there? I smiled a little at myself, reflecting that there is nothing of which one cannot be persuaded by inquietude of spirit.

Empty and listless days followed, and then one morning as I sat at my needle with an eye on the keyboard of the clavichord where Caterina's small, exquisite hands were diligent in practice, Alessandro floundered in on us without asking for permission: that being ordained by me as a prelude to any such appearance. He was perspiring, half with panic, and half with loathsome relish of obscenities, as he spluttered out the dreadful tale which his informants in Florence had been swift to forward to him directly the news of the fall of Rome reached the city. Caterina slid from her stool and stood clutching at my sleeve in terror, for I was on my feet and without control of voice or words as I commanded this young hell-hound to desist from such a recital before a child—to be gone: Paola had come from the inner room, and he stood bleary-eyed, scanning us both defiantly. She was a lusty woman and I no weakling: I took a bowl full of dried herbs from the table and flung it on the floor at Alessandro's feet, and, while he was still flustered by the crash, we pushed him over the threshold and bolted the door. He left the villa that afternoon with his tutors and his gentlemen for Florence, but whether he went of his own initiative or by command of the Cardinal, I did not discover.

I lay that night shivering between the sheets, my imagination repudiating the horror which Alessandro had conveyed, and falling to prayer as I remembered Monsignor Sadoletto, as well as the lady Clarice, not

knowing that in God's mercy they had left Rome before the troops reached it.

I saw afterwards the charred skeleton that was Rome, and I saw the Pope with his long white beard,<sup>27</sup> and ashen countenance, and shrunken form. Perforce I must listen to tales that gave me an actual nausea, and understand what Homer was really writing about when he spoke of the ravenous stomach of the god Mars. Yet, when the uttermost of horror has been compassed, the effect on the soul is curiously a nothingness: the worst has been accomplished and we cannot mend it, and it is not possible to make anything out of it for a moral purpose. Messer Desiderius Erasmus was reported to have written that the barbarities of the Spanish and German troops were unknown in the days of Scythians and Huns, Goths and Vandals: and Monsignor Sadoletto said, and was perhaps persuaded, that the sins of a corrupt age had drawn down the great wrath of God. That the ravaging of Rome was an act of divine justice, was a thesis on the lips of all; but mine own mind puts up a barrier to such expressions. Word must call to tilted word in a way not yet devised before the work of slaughter, rapine, and destruction can have reality or meaning for me. I once heard Bernardo Dovitzi say at Urbino that unless a murderer is fortunate in finding a poet for his murder, it will be forgotten and as nothing however faultlessly it is executed: and I feel that, like a murder, the catastrophe of Rome needs utterance that has structure and glamour if it is to become a conception in the imagination. And perhaps, too, a theme so awful calls for the syntax and formality of the latin tongue.

Another reflection comes to me as well, for the sack of Rome is, I suppose, what is called an epic story, and it has been consolatory for some to exclaim that the tragedy has only been equalled by the fall of Jerusalem. But I say to myself that we do not find epics built around the memories of the men of history who are great of soul, and that it is the leader bankrupt in judgment who attracts the tragic events which bring ruin in their wake and make what the romanticist considers the epic situation.

I slept but fitfully on that grim night, and was awake at dawn when the sound of voices and the tread of feet took me to the window where I saw that the gates into the domain were opened and that a long train of laden mules was entering them. When I dressed myself and went below

I learned that they came from Florence, and that they carried every species of precious gear from the palazzo in the via Larga, but I could get no intelligible account of what was happening there. It was nearly noon before everything was stacked in the great chamber upstairs, and, scarcely had the last mule been led away, when, being in the garden with Caterina, I saw the dozen men or so who formed the guard turn out, and that a parley was going on: then the gates were opened and I was astonished at the small army that was entering them.

The steward came to me presently and said that messer Bernardo di Jacopo Rinuccini would have word with me, and he came, hat in hand, through the parterres, a courteous gentleman of Florence whom I knew well by name. He stood smiling down on Caterina as he explained that for our greater safety he had come to escort us back to the city, and I stood there speechless for a few moments, trying to collect my wits and to resolve what I ought to do. Then I asked him to explain how matters lay. He laughed genially, saying that at the moment it was hard to tell, but his mission was from the Signoria, who thought that among so much unrest it would be wiser if the duchessina were lodged with the good nuns in the convent of Santa Lucia in the via San Gallo.<sup>28</sup>

Even the convents of Florence were of a party complexion, and I knew that Santa Lucia was not for the Medici. I realised at once that Caterina was to be held as a hostage, and I realised too that I was powerless. Messer Rinuccini and I looked steadily at one another, and I resolved forthwith on a composed insouciance. I glanced down at Caterina, whose head now came to my elbow, wondering if she were alarmed, but there was nothing but demure self-importance to be seen on her tractable little countenance: she was always gratified by an occasion which hinged upon herself. We set off in the late afternoon, a litter being provided for Caterina. I was no longer a young woman, and I had no status to replace the confidence in a power to please that is given by youth, but I took my place resolutely alongside the dappled araby horse of messer Rinuccini, and made my mule amble to its paces. I had to convince the Florentine of my Umbrian birth, to make play with the name of the duke of Urbino, and to demonstrate my entire detachment from all Tuscan imbroglios. In this, I suppose, I succeeded, for he was soon telling me frankly of the events in the city.

I discovered from him that Florence was, once more, resolute to be quit of the Medici. My companion made it artlessly clear to me that the real importance for Florence of its connection with Pope Leo and Pope Clement had been financial, and that with the devastation of Rome all



that was at an end. He said it was impossible to guess at the losses of the Florentine traders in Rome itself, but that they must be colossal, and that of course their creditors in the city would suffer: then there was the loss of the traffic with Rome in Florentine commodities, which he put down at 9000 ducats a week, while the papal offices which had been bought by the citizens he estimated at something like 400,000 ducats. He intimated that his own losses would not be inconsiderable, and it did not need to be a Solon to appreciate that the party within the walls ahead who were for the Medici had now nothing more to hope for (at least for the present) and that the rest of the population had nothing to fear. And in these circumstances the Cardinal Passerini was, I apprehended, outvying himself in futilities and indecisions. Messer Rinuccini said to me that of course there were enough papal troops in the city to crush any movement, but now they had no guarantee for their pay, and that he had heard it said that the count Piero Nofri da Montedoglio had asked for 20,000 ducats to satisfy their claims and keep them loyal, and that it had been refused. I learnt that the shops were all shut, and the general temper unpleasant, and that the principal citizens were urgent with all three Cardinals to leave the city before violence came to a head: the Cardinals Ridolfi and Cibo were willing to go, he said, but Cardinal Passerini forever hesitated. This very afternoon, it seemed, sixty or seventy of the citizens had been summoned to the palazzo Medici for a consultation; and he should have been among them, explained messer Rinuccini gallantly, but for this far more agreeable expedition. Then he told me to my surprise that the lady Clarice had that morning arrived in Florence, she and the lord Filippo having left Rome before the army reached it, and having come by sea to Pisa.<sup>29</sup> I wondered greatly what part she meant to play in all this, I remembering the words which the viceroy de Lannoy had used to Ippolito.

I said presently, with an indifference I felt to be perfectly assumed, that it had always seemed to me that the young lord Ippolito was well liked; and messer Rinuccini replied heartily that this was so perhaps. Then he pulled at his beard and twisted his nose, and presently he turned a little towards me as he sat in his saddle. He said that he sometimes indulged in a philosophic mood, and in such a mood he must needs have a compassion for a stripling obliged to suffer from the indiscretions of others just as if he was responsible for them. There had been the indiscretion of his birth to begin with, and the Pope, himself a bastard, had experienced so few inhibitions that he had not taken into account all the fluctuations of prejudice in his birthplace; then it had been a mistake to give the

youth a princely setting, to put him on a peak without letting him make the effort to climb it. I remembered how that Ippolito had said this same thing to the lord de Lannoy, and I returned that such peaks were thrones of peril, for on a shining summit there was always the temptation for youth to abound too much with life, and that never a safe course. Messer Rinuccini laughed quietly as if at some remembrance, and then he said abruptly that, after all, the miscarriage of the whole matter lay with the donkey Passerini da Cortona, and that if he could be driven away, no one, as far as he knew, desired other than that the young Medici should stay in the palazzo in Florence, and grow to a true understanding of citizenship. I felt that I should have been somewhat reassured by all this if it were not for the information about the lady Clarice.

By the time day had gone, the waning moon was in the heaven, and we skirted the city wall to the San Gallo gate without need of lanterns. The moonlit street ahead was empty, and its casements unlighted, and I realised the lateness of the hour, and wondered how many would be awakened by the clatter we made. The convent door was opened by a sleepy portress carrying a flickering lamp, and we stumbled after her up a stair. Messer Rinuccini in bidding us hearty farewell at the portal had assured us that we should find everything arranged for our comfort, but the two cells prepared for us were, I thought, gratuitously ascetic; and when I asked the nun who was in the corridor to meet us for broth or milk for Caterina, she told me that the buttery was locked and she not in possession of the key. She was civil, but it was scarcely a royal welcome, and I marked that the Reverend Mother herself had not deprived herself of sleep to await our arrival. There was nothing to do but make the best of matters. When the nun had gone, Paola produced some sweet cakes and a bottle of wine from her wallet, and although Caterina began to cry with tiredness and the strangeness of it all, she was persuaded back to cheerfulness, and we were all asleep very soon on beds that were reasonably comfortable.

They brought us bread and broth in the morning, and with it our gear, which had been left below the night before; but only lay sisters came to us, and after an hour I was preparing for a sally of discovery, when a well-known and energetic voice sounded in the corridor, and in another moment the lady Clarice stood in the doorway accompanied by the Prioress. There was a torrent of words, Caterina was embraced, there was exclamation and explanation, and I wondered what it all

meant. I was to learn presently that the lady Clarice was now on her way to the palazzo of the Medici, and that, to give formality to her invasion, she desired the attendance of myself and Giovanna Pazzi. My spirit resisted this virtual command. I did not owe my position in the Medici family to the Strozzi, and moreover I was in the dark as to the object of the expedition. The Reverend Mother, who stood there smiling, knew of course that the lady Clarice had been in conference with the Signoria on the previous evening—that she had gone at once to the palazzo Publico when she arrived in the city.

I suppose I quickly made the decision that it would be a stupidity to appear anything but indifferent to the demand of the lady Clarice, and moreover that I ought to be grateful for this opportunity to go abroad and use my eyes and ears. Giovanna and I were given ten minutes for suitable apparelling, and then we were swept away, leaving Caterina hand in hand with the Reverend Mother on their way to the convent garden. Our litters struck across into the via Larga and as we got to the bottom of it they had to push their way through a crowd surging in the loggia and round the courtyard doors of the palazzo Medici. The guard came out when the doors opened and kept the people back as we entered. I found that we were awaited. Cardinal Ridolfi and Ippolito were on the great stair to receive us, and I caught sight of the anxious faces of messer Ottaviano, and of messer Chiarissimo de' Medici and his son Jacopo, and had a glimpse between shoulders of the moonstruck countenance of the young Lorenzino. The lady Clarice had donned for the occasion a green damask dress heavily barred with fringes; it had sleeves of cherry-coloured velvet slashed with white and she wore a great emerald and ruby pendant and earrings and had pearls twisted in the coronet of her abundant hair. Her tiring-woman was an adept at all the arts of the toilet, and, although now over thirty years of age, she was still of handsome mien. Indeed I could not but think it a splendid and a queenly figure that went in front of me, and I had a reproving gesture for Giovanna who had puffed out her own skirts and elevated her own pointed chin in palpable mimicry. Ippolito was wearing an ashen-coloured jerkin and hose over a finely pleated vest; I touched his arm as we neared the top of the stair, and he turned a face that was flushed and concentrated. A few seconds later we were through the ante-room and in the great chamber, now stripped of all its pictures and hangings; and pressing behind us was a crowd of citizens to the number of one hundred

at least. I recognised among them messere Niccolò Capponi, Francesco Vettori, Baccio Valori, and Salvestro Aldobrandini, the secretary of the Signoria, and many others. The Cardinal's throne and baldacchino had been brought from the gallery looking down on the little garden which he had hitherto used as his presence chamber, and a great Crucifix hung on the wall facing the windows with a credence table under it on which his biretta lay. I saw at once that his Eminence had set the scene and meant the initiative to be his, but from the moment she swept across the threshold the lady Clarice took complete control of the occasion. Her gown and sleeves billowed majestically as she made her obeisance and kissed the Cardinal's great sapphire, and before he could speak at all her words came tumbling forth: *Monsignor, Monsignor, what a pass is this to which you have brought us.*

It is not possible for me to remember her further speech precisely, but I know that as I stood there, I thought, at first, that she displayed a great show of reason, but that it was a pity she had not started on a lower note, for her voice rose in scale as she continued, and it became at last shrill to unseemliness. She declaimed energetically that her ancestors had never wielded any power in Florence except that freely accorded them by the people, and that on more than one occasion they had absented themselves from the city in obedience to the popular will, returning only when it had pleased the people to recall them. Such, she said, in her opinion should be the conduct of the Medici now, for it was prudent to conform themselves to the conditions of the times, remembering the desperate position in which his Holiness found himself. She then brushed aside attempted interruption with a gesture, and turning to Ippolito, and to Alessandro who had crept up behind him, she exclaimed that she naturally had their safety more at heart than anyone else had, and that in her opinion they ran an immense risk if they remained in the city: she had now lost control of her voice and of her subject, and even messer Capponi and others who made an attempt to enforce her argument had to give up the contest. Ippolito was smiling contemptuously, which I felt to be an imprudence, and I know not how the absurd hubbub would have ended, had not there been heard the sudden letting off of an arquebus, and that sounding no farther away than the doorway of the sala. It came to my ears afterwards that this was a device of messer Ottaviano for putting an end to the situation, and in that he succeeded, for all voices ceased, I saw nothing but white faces, and before I realised what was happening I, and Giovanna, and the lady Clarice were surrounded, and were being swept along through the corridors and stair-

ways of the palazzo, and were outside it in the via Ginori, and presently over the threshold of the palazzo Ginori, and in its sala, and the focus of another excited gathering. I was astounded to realise that fear of assassination—even wholesale assassination—was in the minds of all.

The lady Clarice sat on a great chair in the chamber of the Ginori, and she looked of a sudden so ill that I, fearing miscarriage, assumed authority and said that a physician must be fetched. The assemblage melted away, and a couch was brought, and she laid upon it; but it was not until the late afternoon that the doctor Busini would allow her to be removed in a litter to the palazzo Strozzi. She desired greatly that I should remain with her, saying, which I felt to be the truth, that Caterina could for the present come to no harm, and that Giovanna would explain to the Reverend Mother how matters lay. Thus I was present in her chamber early next morning when the lord Filippo, to whom she had dispatched a messenger on the previous day, arrived at her bedside from the villa of the Capponi at Legnia where he had spent the night. He was full of solicitude for her, but half smiling, in his wonted way, at all the ferment, saying that he had found half the city awaiting him at the city gate and that the courtyard below was thronged. He went away presently to the palazzo in the via Larga, and did not return until the late afternoon, when he declared that he had never known a day so full of weariness and exasperation.

I know that afterwards, and until the end of his days, Ippolito held that but for the double dealing of the lord Filippo, there need have been no renunciation of his own rank as Magnifico. I have never been able to disentangle matters entirely. I learnt from messer Ottaviano that when the Strozzi reached the palazzo Medici that morning with his brother Lorenzo<sup>30</sup> he was all urbanity, and professed ignorance of what had been occurring. Therewith Ippolito was guileless enough to relate to him the whole story of affairs, and all the tale of the previous day, and to express his bewilderment that the lady Clarice, a Medici, should be siding with the republican faction. Whereat the lord Filippo expressed great sorrow for all that had happened in the city, and declared himself pained by the conduct of the lady Clarice. Unfortunately, he said, she felt that as a Medici she was superior in condition to himself, and he had not the authority under his own roof that he could have wished; otherwise he would have administered such a chastisement that it would have gone hard with her. And that he did say words to this effect I have no doubt, for he was laughing a good deal that evening as he sat by his wife's couch. What she told me herself, when I brought her a spiced

drink before she slept, was that the lord Filippo had spent many hours to and fro between the via Larga and the great council that was sitting in the palazzo Publico. The Cardinal Passerini was in abject fear, for the crowds round the palazzo Medici grew more menacing every hour and he could not trust the unpaid troops,<sup>31</sup> but the boy Ippolito could by no means be brought to reason. The council had agreed that Ippolito and Caterina and Alessandro should be regarded as good citizens, that they should be allowed to remain in the palazzo exempt from all extraordinary taxation, and to go to and from the city as they desired: moreover Ippolito was not to be deprived of the offices he filled: and in return for all this the citadels of Pisa and Livorna, held by foreign captains in the name of the Medici, were to be ceded to the Signoria. The lady Clarice said she thought these terms exceeding generous, and a great tribute to the diplomacy of the lord Filippo, but he had been unable to prevail with Ippolito to accept them, and then, as would be wisest, to leave the city for a while to await the outcome of events in Rome. The Signoria had given the youth the night to think it over, and she herself meant, the lady Clarice said, to be with the lord Filippo to the via Larga on the morrow. I answered, without comment, that if she was to do that she must sleep now, but before I laid myself on the mattress at the foot of her bed she began to speak about Pope Clement, not concealing the odium in which she held him.

I did my best next morning to persuade the lady Clarice to lie abed, and this not only because of my anxiety about her interference in affairs, but because she was of a truth not fit to be abroad. But no one had ever prevailed with her when her course was set. The lord Filippo had been with the Signoria earlier, and he came to his wife when she was in the hands of her tiring-maid saying that he was commissioned to demand that the guard should be raised from the palazzo Publico, and that in the palazzo Medici should be disarmed, and that the Cardinal with Ippolito and Alessandro should leave that afternoon for Poggio a Caiano. Only so could bloodshed now be averted: all Florence was in the streets: nobody could foretell what the next few hours would bring forth—this and more he related.

The crowd in the via Larga was willing enough to give way before the Strozzi liveries, but it was packed so tight that it was with difficulty that the lord Filippo, on horseback just in front of us, could make a lane for us through it, and we had to descend in the street and slip into the palazzo through the door opened to admit one of us at a time only, it being deemed too dangerous to let the litters enter for fear of an onrush

of the people. There was a strong guard in the courtyard and on the stairs, but I thought them slack in bearing and discipline, and the presence chamber and the great chamber were deserted, except for donna Antonia, and she looking much distraught. She would have the lady Clarice be seated, telling the lord Filippo that the Cardinal was in his own apartments and would receive him there. We waited for half an hour before the lord Filippo came back, and during that time seven or eight people had collected around us, among them the count Nofri, he saying that his anxiety was very great for he could no longer rely on his men at all. At last the lord Filippo's footsteps were heard, he coming hastily and evidently enchain'd. The lady Clarice had risen to meet him; and he took her hand saying that, he having failed to exorcise the devil that was in Ippolito, she herself must now do whatever she thought best.

It was scarcely possible for us all to keep pace with her, as she trod the corridor and through the chambers to the Cardinal's ante-room, crossed its floor without ceremony, and made her way into the gallery beyond,<sup>32</sup> with complete oblivion of ceremonial. I noticed the moment I was over the threshold in her wake that a window must be open, for the roar of the crowd in the via Ginori and in the piazza San Lorenzo beyond could be plainly heard. The Cardinal sat at a table spread with papers, Ippolito was beyond it with his feet apart and his hands on his hips, and Alessandro was crouching on a stool against the wall. The lady Clarice without the least preliminary, and with the barest courtesy for the Cardinal, raised her voice, as she had raised it two days before: but if on the previous occasion she had sought to persuade with a whip, this time she was truly using a whip of scorpions.

I have heard many versions of this scene, and it has often been repeated to me with plaudit that the lady Clarice told the two youths that the palazzo Cosimo de' Medici had built was not meant for a stable for mules.<sup>33</sup> As far as my own memory goes she did not use these actual words, but it is of course not possible to have an exact recollection of speech that was poured forth in such a torrent. I think she began by declaiming that a safe and honourable course had been proposed, and that all this indecision was disgraceful: that the time for consideration was long past, and that, not to understand this, meant little realisation of the way her ancestors had ruled Florence. Hurling her words more particularly at Ippolito, she said that the whole affair showed that both he and Alessandro were, as all the world knew, not of the blood of the Medici at all: and she added that she said this not only of them but of Pope Clement, wrongfully Pope, and most justly now a prisoner. She

finished by declaring that go they must from a house which, as the whole city was protesting, did not belong to them. This was the pith of her matter, and she managed with voice and presence to be overwhelming. Ippolito had moved forward, and he stood at the corner of the table with his palm on its surface, and was regarding her unwaveringly. He had grown as white as his vest, and his eyes were black, smouldering pits of anguish. For me, standing there like a dummy as I must, this was the most bitter of all the moments of this unendurable life.

It is with amazement that I remember it was the Cardinal who put an end to what had become intolerable. He had not moved during the whole harangue and had managed to look as if he had not heard it; but he now rose to his feet, and said it was the hour for dinner and he hoped all present would do him the honour to remain. And what was astonishing is that we did so, and that we presently all sat down together in the great dining chamber. I had the count Nofri opposite me at the bottom of the table and when I asked him how it would all end, he said it would end that afternoon in a way that was already prepared. Horses were saddled in the stable, a troop was ready as escort, the Cardinal and Alessandro de' Medici would go; and if the young Ippolito still resisted there was the prison in the tower of the palazzo Publico for him. He himself, he declared, meant to accompany the escort, and he should not return, for he was beginning to be sure that his life in this city was no longer safe. I looked furtively along the table from time to time at Ippolito. He was seated between the Strozzi and the Capponi who were both kindly doing what in them lay to rouse him to some response, but I saw that something had died within him, leaving him for the time without sense of direction or any power of rallying, and that if this stupor lasted he would probably bestride the animal prepared for him without argument; I prayed that it might be so, for there was now no possibility that the same city walls could safely encircle himself and the lady Clarice.

We rose from the table to a racket of activity, servants hurrying with bundles for the packhorses, and noise prevailing everywhere. I escaped to the open gallery above the cortile and stood looking down on the hubbub. The count Nofri strode past me presently, and turned back for a moment to say that he had the escort 300 strong already posted in the street outside, but he thought there would be no trouble, for the mob had now learned that its will was to prevail and its mood had changed. Five minutes later I saw him busied below, two mules were led out of the stable passage, the Cardinal Passerini in riding dress came



down the stair with Alessandro, and they were both helped into the saddle. In the next minute the count, messer Capponi, and the lord Filippo were mounted too, and the cortile was full of restless horses and mules and their riders. But Ippolito did not come: and then he was suddenly there in the midst, sprung up like a flame, all in scarlet with his scarlet velvet cap and its great jewel, and with a groom holding the stirrup of his black mare with the white fetlock.

I heard the great doors being dragged back, and with the count leading the way, the Cardinal and Alessandro disappeared between the grey pillars. There came a hoarse yell of *Bastardo* from a thousand throats in the street outside to greet them, and, in the court within, the black mare was rampant, pawing the air, with Ippolito hanging on to her bridle. She came to earth again, and Ippolito stood patting her neck. A little colour had crept into his cheeks, and suddenly he raised his head and his gaze swept the roundels of the gallery where I stood. Between the slender pillars which carried the arches opposite I saw the bland faces of the Cardinals Ridolfi and Cibo, of the lady Lucrezia, the lady Clarice, and Piero Salviati: they were all Medici or of Medici mothers. Over the balustrade of the upper gallery sprawled half a dozen Tartar slaves.

With Ippolito now in the saddle, the black mare was scattering grooms and onlookers with her heels. But her rider had her quickly in the vestibule beyond the pillars, and then, with a thunderous rattle of hoofs on the paving stones, he was gone. I saw the lord Filippo and messer Capponi look at one another with astonished faces before they followed him, for the roar of the crowd which packed the via Larga had died down abruptly. I heard the dull thud of the great doors, and the clang of the bolts shooting swiftly into place.

# LE SELVE



# LE SELVE

I CAN still hear, reverberating through the years, the thud of ponderous doors and the dull grating of bolts. I can still remember the silence that, after the hubbub, seemed to have dropped into the cortile like a stone. I can still close my eyes as I closed them then, and have the vision of Ippolito thrust forth into a great darkness, and in that darkness glowing with a radiance for all to see.

I suppose I did not keep my eyes closed very long, and when I opened them it was on the sight of the lady Clarice beckoning to me to come to her. She was decided to bring Caterina at once from the convent, and although the Cardinal Ridolfi was at her elbow advising her against precipitancy, she turned a deaf ear, and messer Ottaviano and myself were presently in her wake across the garden: she foreseeing scruples on the part of the Reverend Mother and resolute to undertake the affair herself.

We found the convent all in a pucker over the rumours of what had passed during the morning, and the Prioress, for fear of the Signoria, was not willing to yield up her charge. But Caterina, who had come to my side and was clinging to my hand, herself put an end to bandying of words by unwonted tears and a shrill wailing which discomposed everyone, and shortly we had herself and madonna Giovanna and the maids across the via San Gallo to the door set in the garden wall in the alley at the end of it. We were at once installed in our old rooms, and I found that the lady Clarice and the Cardinal Ridolfi meant to take up their own residence in the palazzo. The lady Lucrezia Salviati and many others of the kindred of the Medici, together with messer Capponi, were with them at supper, and after Caterina was disposed in bed, and I had set Giovanna beside her to read her to sleep, I ventured beyond our own boundaries, and was aware of much to and fro of leading citizens, of the restlessness and sauciness of the servants, and of the crowd, much thinner than in the morning hours, but still thronging the encircling streets.

The next day the same uneasy conditions prevailed, and I heard the echoes of the lady Clarice's voice more than once. No one came near us but donna Antonia, and she anxious and incoherent. The heat was great for the season of the year, and I asked if she thought we might go down

after supper to the garden. She was perplexed as to how to answer, and went to fetch messer Ottaviano. He came after an interval and had a decided veto for my proposal. He said with a gesture of great fatigue that he knew not how it would all end: that a suggestion had been put forth that Caterina should succeed to the honours of her family with a small council appointed to act for her until she grew to womanhood, but that this had met with a frenzied opposition. The feeling in the city was that the Medici were, after all, still uneradicated and undaunted, and it was tossed hither and thither among the confusion of conflicting suspicions that the lady Clarice was installed in the palazzo because of some plot of the lord Filippo Strozzi, he seeing the chance to win to supremacy by means of his wife. It would be hazardous for the lord Filippo to return to the city at present, said messer Ottaviano, and indeed there was great danger just now for everyone who was connected with the Medici—even Niccolò Capponi, just returned from Poggio a Caiano, was somewhat suspect. At the moment the lady Clarice was in the great chamber, opposing with all her vigour the demand that Caterina should be returned to the convent, and her vivacity was as usual tearing from her perilous truths.

I went back presently into the chamber where Giovanna was giving Caterina a lesson in chess, and, as I stood watching them, I asked myself whether I ought not to prepare this child a little for the perilous future, and I felt a great pity as I watched her lovely hands moving among the chessmen. She was all awareness—ever since we had fetched her from the convent the day before, she had been all silent perturbation—and, when Giovanna brought out the chessboard, I had thought it asking too much that she should give attention to instruction in the game: yet she sat there a model of behaviour. It is certain that she had an inborn faculty for what is expedient. When messer Capponi came to us presently she seemed to realise at once that, although tears had helped to bring her to the via Larga yesterday, no tears would avail to keep her there. It was wretched to see her small white face and its apprehensive eyes when she heard that only Paola and the younger maid, Pepina, were to go with her to the via San Gallo. Messer Capponi told me that very courteously. He was of stately presence and deliberate manner and all that he said was kindly. The lady Clarice, flushed and very angry, was outside the chapel door as we came to the head of the great stair, and she would have Caterina and Giovanna and myself inside the chapel to kneel awhile in prayer. I could not but feel that the Medici forefathers, looking down on us from the walls with tranquil gaze, must be

reflecting on the ineptness of women's supplications: their own greatness had lain in the creation of the conditions they had needed for themselves, and not in the tragic adaptability to conditions which alone seems to make women availing.

I was to learn that the adaptability can be dignified. Caterina would not take the hand of either Giovanna or myself as we went with her across the larger garden. The curls that gave Paola so much trouble hid her face, she was all taut, and was walking with a diminutive stiffness of pride towards the dream we call life: I should have prayed that she might prove a proud walker there to the end. At the door in the garden wall I kissed her cold little cheek and put a cloak around her and pulled the hood over her head, and messer Capponi lifted her on to the donkey which was waiting there, trying to make her smile with a joke about her weight as he did so. Three or four men-at-arms were standing around the door and followed the little procession, openly amused at Paola and Pepina who were weeping noisily.

I decided as I recrossed the garden that I must have word with Cardinal Ridolfi. Giovanna must go to her own home, and would need escort through the streets, and I wished to ask him for a recommendation for myself to the convent of la Santissima Annunziata delle Murate. This was the pleasantest asylum I could think of, for it was under the Benedictine Rule, and was a place of well-being for ladies who lodged there, and I felt that I should have freedom of action and be in touch with what was going on in the city and in the world. I was determined not to be engulfed by the lady Clarice and the Strozzi family.

It was a vain resolve. I was scarcely on the stair when I learnt that the Cardinal wished to see me. I found him in a cabinet beyond the great chamber, now emptied of the agitated Ottimati and Piagnoni who had been to and fro there all day. Messer Ludovico Martelli and others whom I knew to be friends of the Medici were with him, and I was told briefly that the papal troops had all deserted and that it would scarcely be possible to keep the populace out of the palazzo on the morrow: that the physician had just been called to the lady Clarice, but that it was imperative she should start for the Strozzi villa, Le Selve on Bellosguardo, as soon as darkness fell. It was taken completely for granted that I would not desert her, and any protest on my part had become impossible.

Several hours of confused activity followed. I found the lady Clarice

in great pain, and there was danger of a miscarrying as there had been once or twice before; but she surprised me by her resolution to be gone, for I had surmised that she might make her weakness into a challenge. Anger had left her, and the strong sense that was behind her impetuosity was directing her. She told the doctor Boni when he came that she would rather go forth to death by the roadside under the stars than lie waiting to be stabbed by Florentine daggers here on her couch; and, if I thought to myself that this was an improbability, I saw that no one else did so. Her energetic mind was at work, and she sent for her cousin the Cardinal to learn what steps he was taking to save everything of worth that had not already gone to Poggio a Caiano. He told her that his own servants had been in and out of the palazzo all day, unnoticed in the confusion, and that a good deal had been removed, and he asked me to bring to him certain jewelled ornaments and small objects which Caterina had been given for her use. I saw that the lady Clarice thought that these might well go with us to Le Selve; she said nothing however, but when the Cardinal left us, she asked me to make sure that there went with us Caterina's bed coverlet of my own embroidering, and what else I judged should be preserved. I interpreted her wishes liberally. It was on midnight when she said that she felt herself able to start. I had wondered how we should get away and through the streets unmolested, but I heard that it had been let abroad that two of the slaves had died of the plague and were to be carried forth to be buried during the night, and this had thinned the mob to vanishing point. Our cavalcade grew as we went through the dark city, and I realised that the silent figures who joined us were armed Strozzi henchmen. The Cardinal Ridolfi in the dress of a quiet citizen left us after he had seen us safely outside the walls, and I heard him say that he was going for better safety to the house of the Martelli and not to his own palazzo.

It was dawn when we passed by the gates and under the walls and towers of the village of Segna and began to climb through the forest up a path so steep that the mules must strain and slip. On and upwards we went in a second night made by the black trees, and then we were out on a small plateau in front of a low building. Below us was the length and breadth of the plain we had crossed, threaded by the sinuous silver riband of the river; and, far away on its eastern boundary, and flaunting above the faintly patterned haze that was the city of Florence, rose the immense dome of Santa Maria del Fiore, magnified and made lambent by the sun which had just lifted itself over the rim of the cup of the all-encircling mountains.

After that first rather overwhelming vision, I had but little leisure for contemplation of the shifting wonders of the panorama of the vale of the Arno. The lady Clarice had survived the journey to Le Selve with great spirit, but she was in danger of her life for many subsequent days, and, after her son Pietro was born, she was never in health again. She died at the villa in the following month of May (being the year of our Lord 1528).

It is not easy to be relevant about that strange year spent in the solitude of the forest villa, but it were best to set down firstly that the lord Filippo came to us there in the month of June, and very glad, so he affirmed, to be quit of the devil that was Ippolito. I gather together and set down all I heard him narrate, and all that I had at second hand from the lady Clarice.

The towns of Pisa and Livorna (Leghorn) had always been of great importance to the traders of Florence because they were the outlet to the sea, and the first thought of the Signoria had been to insure their allegiance. It had been supposed that it would not be difficult to persuade the constables of the two citadels to give them up, seeing that the Pope was beleaguered in a fortress that must soon capitulate and that the young Medici were fugitives. The mission had been deputed to the lord Filippo, and he, realising that his position would be made easier if he could carry an order signed both by the Cardinal Passerini and Ippolito, had suggested that messer Niccolò Capponi should ride out from Florence with them: he believing that round the supper table at Poggio a Caiano, with appetites satisfied, good wine in the goblets, and lordship of Florence realised as nothingness, it might be possible, with the aid of his urbane and sincere brother-in-law, to bring Ippolito to see reason. How much of pure reason and how much of the wine cup there was in the signature which Ippolito scrawled beneath that of the Cardinal may only be guessed. Both he and Alessandro had to be roused from a heavy sleep next morning to start on the long ride to Pistoia and Lucca. Messer Capponi had risen yet earlier in order to return to Florence.

Except that other asylum was lacking, it is not possible to say why Lucca was chosen as a goal. As an independent city it had always distrusted the Medici, and it was known that Pope Leo had intrigued with the French king to get it added to the Florentine state. It was now under the protection of the emperor Charles who had confirmed its



privileges. It is possible that Cardinal Passerini, with whom the choice of destination must have lain, had some assurance that he and his two charges would find hospitality there. However that may be, a pleasant hospitality was forthcoming, and the lord Filippo said it was brought home to him at once that, although the emperor was now paramount in Italy, yet the Pope, encircled by the dark walls of San Angelo, was still the Pope and had the uneasy conscience of all Europe on his side. He thought it had not taken Ippolito half an hour to come to the same conclusion, and a suddenly recovered assurance and the donning of the doublet with chequered sleeves for supper in the loggia of the palazzo of the Guinigi had announced it.

Lucca had never been republican, for power had always belonged to the nobles whose wealth came from the trading in silk, and in the past they had raised their tall towers and had engaged in fights for individual mastery. But nowadays it was all very quiet and civilised, there was a Signoria, many of the palazzi were rebuilt or refaced and were rich in frescoes, hangings, pictures and statues; while the company of artists, scholars, wits and poets was as much a fashion as in more important cities. The wealthiest family there seemed to be the Buonvisi whose palazzo was outside the walls with a great garden alongside the moat. It was they who received the Cardinal Passerini and Alessandro, the lord Filippo and Ippolito being lodged in one of the two ancient palazzi of the Guinigi which faced each other across a street in the centre of the town.<sup>1</sup> Lucca lay far from the mountains in a treeless plain, and in this summer of exceptional heat the lord Filippo told us that he found the burning days and airless nights very intolerable, and he was anxious to accomplish what had to be done at Pisa and Livorna and be away. But the horses that had come from Florence needed rest, and before a day could be set it came to his knowledge that the captains of the two fortresses had heard what was to be demanded of them, and had published abroad that they held their charges from Pope Clement and should only give them up for his countersign. The lord Filippo had thereupon decided that he would get the countenance of the Cardinal and would take Ippolito with him to persuade the two commanders that the liberty of Ippolito himself and of Alessandro depended on surrender of the fortresses to the Signoria of Florence.

There can be little doubt that many in Lucca were laughing with Ippolito when he rode away on his black mare, and that laughter was widespread when he rode back in two days' time without the lord Filippo. This one had been astonishing enough to credit that, stupefac-

tion now over, the banished young Magnifico was going to make affairs easy for the Strozzi. At Pisa, Ippolito was allowed into the Citadel and came out again in an hour to say that no solicitation of his could prevail, and all that remained was to find some means to get into communication with his Holiness and obtain the countersign, and in the morning the lord Filippo learned that he had collected his servants before dawn and had ridden with them back to Lucca. The efforts which the lord Filippo then made to rouse the citizens of Pisa were unavailing, and he realised very well that his failure to contrive the surrender of the fortress was not going to make his position in Florence an enviable one when he should return there.

Both the emperor and the king of France naturally had their agents everywhere, and information about persons and events in every part of Italy can never have failed either of them. The intelligence of the tragedy of Rome and the tale of the metamorphosis in Florence would have reached king Francis long before it got to Spain, and, about a fortnight after his ride back from Pisa, Ippolito in Lucca was made buoyant by an invitation to go north to Turin brought to him from the French king's uncle, the duke of Savoy.<sup>2</sup> The lure was contrived so swiftly that it is evident the king had realised the value of Ippolito as a pawn with which he might presently drive some conceivable bargain with the Pope, and even make difficulties for the emperor: he probably had the virtuoso's curiosity as well, for rumour had long since fanned fumes of fancy in all the courts of Europe about a young Magnifico crowned with heavenly air.

To Ippolito the invitation was as heady wine, and the more that it distinguished him from Alessandro; it would be a lordly adventuring into the unknown, and it would, above all, be an escape from the Cardinal Passerini and his distrust for all in life that gives one a springing foot. He was without misgiving when the Cardinal offered no opposition, only requiring that Alessandro should go with him as far as Massa to be left there in the care of the Cardinal Cibo who had taken refuge with his brother the marquis of Massa.<sup>3</sup> Ever since his expulsion from Florence the Cardinal Passerini must have been lying in wait for some contingency which would relieve him of his unprofitable responsibility for the bastards of the Medici, and Ippolito's host, the lord Andrea Guinigi, was not unwilling to further their going forth; so the two presently rode away with their men-at-arms and accompanied for a short distance by a merry company of the young sons of the Mansi, the

Bernardini, the Cenani and other noble families of Lucca. Thus they came between the mountains and the sea to Massa, and Ippolito found that he had been trapped, and that the marquis Lorenzo Cibo meant to prevent his journey into Savoy, and would enforce his veto.

I have no doubt that Ippolito sulked in Massa with lacerated pride and with a warring soul, but presently authority laid a further hand upon him. On the fifth day of June the Pope surrendered the fortress of San Angelo, and although he was not himself allowed to leave it, the Cardinals who were with him were given their liberty under certain provisos, and the Cardinal Farnese came north to his bishopric at Parma: a courier from him arrived presently in Massa bearing his Holiness' command that Cardinal Cibo should take Ippolito and Alessandro to Parma to be lodged in the episcopal palazzo there.

When I heard this at Le Selve I was glad. I had first encountered the Cardinal Farnese in the Montefeltro palazzo in Rome, and all knew that during the pontificate of the Borgia, and in that of Pope Julius, his life had been irregular; but I had it from Monsignor Bembo (not without some jesting) that a great moral change had come to him and that he had taken Priests' Orders. Pietro Bembo had said to me that Alessandro Farnese had had a very long experience of affairs, and that he was of great practical wisdom, and, in so many ways the most outstanding of all the Cardinals, that but for inveterate chance he would have been Pope. It was impossible not to picture Ippolito's present rebellion against life, and I was anxious to persuade myself that no better destination than Parma could have been found for him. He had known the Cardinal Farnese as a familiar in San Pietro in his childhood, and today must have a respectful appreciation for intellectual powers and a humanism which were embellished by a particular charm of manner. On the other hand the Cardinal owed much to the Medici. He had received his education in their palazzo in Florence in the time of the Magnifico, Lorenzo, and he and Giovanni de' Medici had been sent to the University of Pisa together; while his present riches were owing to the wealth of benefices with which Pope Leo had endowed him.<sup>4</sup> My incarceration at Le Selve seemed much more tolerable when I had the hope that, for the present at all events, Ippolito was to some degree safe from himself. I learned that Cardinal Ridolfi was now in Parma too.

Notwithstanding his discomfiture over the matter of the Pisan citadel, the lord Filippo Strozzi had returned from Pisa to Lucca: perhaps feel-

ing that he would best placate the Signoria of Florence by keeping a watch on events there, perchance on account of some interrupted affair of gallantry. He seems to have resumed pleasant relations with both the Cardinal and Ippolito, and I suppose it was because he estimated the circumstance that he was banker and merchant as of first importance in his life that he was rarely betrayed into showing rancour against his fellow-men: then, too, he had a witty outlook on affairs, and if his own part in the late events in Florence had not been one of pure integrity, he would have sardonic appreciation for this calling of quits. On his way through the world his cleverness had won for him a place in men's estimation which I felt to be singularly unstable; for I saw in him an ensample of those who, after that they are at pains to be supple, to make merry, to offend no one, to please women, to humour men of higher station, to mix in all diversions as well as in the traffic of the marketplace and the council-chamber, to know how to hide their secret as well as their chagrin—who are at pains in all this, and then, after all, are sure of nothing. With Ippolito the lord Filippo was only sure of affable recognition of his position as an elder, and I think this had always piqued him ever since Ippolito's childhood in Rome.<sup>5</sup>

In the long, quiet days at Le Selve, either within the shuttered house, or on the balcony where we sat when the sun had gone down behind the mountain (or later in the year around the crackling logs on the hearth), there was a continuity of talk; our isolation making us much aware of one another, and each one desirous, out of not ignoble vanity, that daily intercourse should not lose its balance and its form. The villa was small, with narrow navel stairways only, and it was very inconveniently planned. It had belonged to the family of Bonsi, but the lord Filippo, together with a member of the Buondelmonti family, had made a loan to its owner, Giovanni Bonsi, and after this Giovanni's death they had won the property by a process of law from the widow monna Lessandra Bonsi. The Strozzi then acquired the interest of the Buondelmonti, and he had talked of enlarging the dwelling and of making a garden; but he had never done so, and all the fruit and vegetables the household required came from the monastery.<sup>6</sup>

The discovery of the monastery was a sensation of the day after my arrival. I had seen a rising path among the trees behind the house and had followed it, to find myself in a few moments face to face with a shrine set in the angle of two walls and wide sloping cobbled steps which went up along one of them to the door of a church: climbing the

steps I came to an open door in the wall itself, and looking in I saw a cloister, with lilies blooming and a magnolia tree standing beside a well. The lady Clarice laughed a little at my unnecessary astonishment, and told me that this was Santa Maria delle Selve, and that the Carmelites had been there for two centuries. She said that, were it not for the proximity of these monks with the lusty lay-brothers well armed, it would never have been safe to send her children to the villa, for their tutor was no man to cope with bandits, and the servants all too few.

Messer Francesco Zeffi, the tutor, was not a warrior in appearance but he made up in wits for what he lacked in agility, and he and the Reverend Prior, who was often with us, were both adepts at controversy which was a diversion for the lady Clarice. The lord Filippo, when he was there, would be sometimes amused by them, and sometimes in the mood to set up his own topics in opposition and to keep them agoing. He reverted continually to Lucca, and was thoroughly satisfied one evening when he roused evident curiosity by flinging out that the sulky Ippolito would soon forget the lady Ularia, and be thoroughly corrupted and comforted by the nymphs of Parma. I was of imperfect knowledge, so that I had to have this unravelled for me next day by messer Zeffi who had not himself been puzzled for long. His explanation was that the lady Ularia del Carroto, wife of Paolo Guinigi lord of Lucca, had been dead for a hundred years, and she lay carved in lustrous marble purity on her garlanded tomb in the duomo of Lucca: while as for the nymphs, he said, there was a young painter in Parma, one Antonio Allegri of Correggio, who was busy covering all the churches in the city with the works of an imagination that was radiant but very audacious and wantoning. I contrived that messer Zeffi should mention the tomb in Lucca on another occasion, and the lord Filippo was easily led to relate that the day after their arrival, being a Sunday, he and Ippolito had accompanied their host and hostess to Mass in the duomo, and that afterwards they had been led to this Guinigi effigy in the transept and had stood around it with a genuine feeling of reverence: for, said the Strozzi, even he, a world-worn huckster, was moved to recognition of a transcendence, and that the sculptor had caught, and pinioned down here for all time, the image of what woman in life and death might be but rarely is. It was evident by his wrapt countenance that to Ippolito such majesty of quiet acceptance was a revelation of something in existence undreamed-of, and the lady Gemma Guinigi, poised over against him in billowing skirts of saffron-coloured ormesino, and watching him under curving lashes, had exclaimed that

this deep of repose was a fiction, and that there was after all something between this and a revolution: at which Ippolito had reddened and smiled. And from this hour, said the lord Filippo, the interest of the lady Gemma in her younger guest had been conspicuous, she making a sanction for it by the need to inform his awakened curiosity about the new doctrines which had long been broadcast in Lucca because of its commerce with Geneva. The Signoria of Lucca had prohibited the sale of Martin Luther's books, but they were all to be found in the palazzo Guinigi, and the disaster of Rome had loosened tongues in open discussion. The lord Andrea, himself prating at table about *The Babylonish Captivity*, could not take exception if he found the lady Gemma, his wife, with *The Liberty of a Christian Man* in her hand and Ippolito beside her on the window seat.

It was demonstration how little important the ferment beyond the Alps had seemed in Rome in the time of Pope Leo that I should hear the lady Clarice wondering languidly what this thesis of *Justification by Faith* really meant, she saying that she had not studied the Holy Gospels since she was a girl with her tutor, but that she had no remembrance that the inspired writers ever compared faith and obedience the one with the other, or had appropriated distinct offices to each. The Reverend Prior, who was unwontedly devout, answered her that this of a truth was so, and that from beginning to end of Scripture there is but this one doctrine that the only way of salvation is the surrender of ourselves to our Maker, alike in worship and in resignation of our will. He told us at somewhat tedious length the story of the patriarch from the Pentateuch, showing how Abraham found favour in God's sight because he gave himself up to Him, and that this was faith or obedience, whichever we choose to call it: his faith embracing God's promises, and his obedience cherishing God's commands. Faith had been the essence of every religion including the Jewish, said the Prior, but Christianity is religion and something more, for it is faith illuminated by love: we kneel at Christ's feet in faith, and then rise in glad obedience to do His will. They are but one thing viewed differently.

I thought this very cogent and conclusive, yet one day when he was alone with me, messer Zeffi opened up the subject again, saying that, although the Prior had seemed convincing, yet he, too, might well be blamed for heresy should the work of reformation within the Church itself, begun in all earnestness by the new Order of the Chietines<sup>7</sup> on the Pincian, ever survive the downfall of Rome. With the Bishop Gian Caraffa at their head, this secular foundation had practised poverty and

the self-abnegation of good works in an extreme form as a living protest against all the notorious abuses. But let no one think that these priests were in rebellion, said messer Zeffi: they had their brief from his Holiness, and were only notable in having a more burning consciousness than others of the glory and authority of Holy Church: they knew Her to be the creation of God, Her government His express design, Her rulers instituted by His immediate act, and Her mission to be the guardian of thought and guide of the mind. He had been interested in the Prior's unconscious exposition, and its unconscious acceptance by the lady Clarice and myself, for it was a proof to him that the doctrines percolating through the Alps were coming to flower in soil that had been prepared by Cosimo de' Medici's Platonic Academy, where it was taught that truth lived in the soul itself and existed before Church or Councils and stood outside them both. This pre-disposition gave a mystical complexion to the wearisome German formula *Justification by Faith* directly it was blown about by the winds of discussion in Italy. Human life, said the tutor, twisting my embroidery silk in his fingers, has always had its Question and its search for the final word; and this is the Question God Himself demands and which meets us everywhere, and notably on every page of the Psalter. Fra Martin Luther's virtual charge was that the Church saw no need to ask the Question and that the Mass was an escape from it. Luther had put it after his own manner, and tempestuously, but it seemed improbable that he had found the answer, because he conceived the supreme desire for God as an inverted capacity, as an infinite misery, in that man is not only a sinner but sin itself, and must deliver himself up to be judged: this man can only do on the strength of his faith if he himself has been laid hold of by the mercy of God: Christ crucified being the bearer of the promise.

I recalled to myself, and repeated to messer Zeffi, what Monsignor Sadoletto had once said to me about the theologian's heaven where these questions should become a clarity and no longer perplex and vex the mind: and he made reply that theology was indeed the most concentrated of all forms of thought and needed especial powers of the understanding, but that he judged an attempt to be an amateur theologian worthwhile in that it gave a set of values. He found in himself a need to exercise his spirit, born, he knew, of all the new learning of the last generation which had taught us our need to appreciate the vastness of time and the length of human experience: speculation had been emancipated, and had raised issues that reason must discuss and resolve before it could be at peace with itself or the Church. The Church had

been startled out of complacency by the late events, and it had even come to his ears, said fat Francesco Zeffi, (and I remember thinking there was little that did not) that the Latin secretary to the emperor Charles, don Alfonso Valdès, had written a treatise in the form of a dialogue (*Diálogo de Lactancio*) in which he had entreated the emperor to take possession of the papal states and destroy all the worldly power of the Pope as a first step towards the recovery of the Church. I suppose I looked aghast at this, for messer Zeffi wrinkled the whole expanse of his wide face into a smile, saying that the conscience of all Europe had been so roused by the Holy Father's plight that the emperor would scarcely find such a step politic, even if he desired it: yet it did afford proof how far men's minds had travelled in a demand for strong measures.

I made a comment here that I often thought Pope Clement much to be pitied in that he had inherited so many troublous conditions from Pope Leo. And the tutor replied that much due to the first Medici Pope's insouciance was now probably past mending: the schism in Germany was not acknowledged, he said, but relations with the Curia had been non-existent for some time, while in Denmark and in Sweden there was a spirit which, if it were not Lutherism, might have the same schismatic result: and England, he added, inscrutably truculent about obedience to the Apostolic See for many centuries, might well make a bid for a severance. There was no doubt that we lived in times of rebuke and blasphemy, and a demand for a General Council could not be evaded for ever: perchance when that day dawned there would be a reverent remembrance that San Pietro, the founder of pontifical authority, had himself been in the wrong in his controversy with San Paolo, and yet had preserved Christian unity. But, pursued my companion, while he anticipated the complexion of much of the necessary reform in observance and in morals, and a return in due time to the decencies and proprieties of the ancient rule, yet he speculated not a little if Holy Church, recalled to the sanctity and sobriety of order, would not tend to a severer emphasis on her fundamental formula, which was, as all knew, that discretion to discuss matters of dogma was withheld from the laity.

I cannot aver that all Francesco Zeffi and I said to one another about this subject was on one, or on several, occasions, but I know that I demurred at his assertion that a good Catholic may not reason about the Faith, because I myself had so often taken part in unpretending argument both in Urbino and in Rome. He exclaimed thereat that what I said only illustrated the pass things had come to: the Church was a divine institution, and maintained that Her authority over men's souls



was absolute, and yet it had long been established as a fashion that beautiful women should sit hand in hand with their lovers in the embrasures of windows, or in alcoves of clipped box, and seek to discover truth by an intense gaze. I laughed at this, and, remembering my Virgil, I replied that perhaps only under those conditions could the veiled and crowned phantom that went among us under the name of Wisdom be perceived: but there could be no doubt that what messer Zeffi alleged was true, and that all the communing about religion which was so frequent did tend unconsciously to heresy. Much of it might seem as unexceptional as what the Reverend Prior had set forth, and it was probably more notable as emotion that was on the side of righteousness than as thought of positive value: but it had needed a mentor to make me realise how little allusion to authority was in any of this search for the perfect way, how little acknowledgment that there can be no such thing as abstract religion and that in the Church alone is the path of sanctification to be found. Messer Zeffi told me one day, on his return from one of his frequent visits to Florence, that the Signoria in its revived zeal for strictness of life had prohibited all discussion on religious matters except between clerics. He thought it fortunate, he said with his derisive chuckle, that he and I were domiciled where we were.

Florence had become almost non-existent to the imagination, a mirage, sometimes glowing behind a veil of amethyst, sometimes glimmering beneath an opal shroud: and, between its remoteness and Le Selve, the great level of the plain lay as if in a trance, scarcely a bird shaking the quiet in which God Himself seemed to be exulting.

Yet in the city was horror, for in weather so hot that the grapes died on the vines the plague grew in virulence until the deaths were as many as 400 daily. Excepting messer Niccolò Capponi, who had been made Gonfalonier on the first day of June, all those who had villas had taken refuge in them. Fearfulness within and terror stalking without had kindled a severe moral panic, and the lord Filippo, who infrequently paid the city a furtive visit, was often merry about it after supper when the servants had withdrawn. As a first step towards godliness, he said, the Jews had all been expelled, and then the localities where a certain vice prevailed had been purged and penalties imposed. And so great had the zeal for regeneration become that even new sumptuary laws and regulations about the size of dowries were acquiesced in, while prohibitions were

endless; and, together with that against religious discussion, and with other numberless frailties, gambling, blasphemy, and walking about the church during Mass were all vetoed. The Madonna had made one of her sundry pilgrimages from Impruneta to the Santa Annunziata, and the throngs around the shrine there had certainly become a means of spreading the infection of the plague, declared the lord Filippo.

In August we learned that Caterina had been removed from the convent of Santa Lucia to that of Santa Caterina di Siena, and that she had been taken there alone and without attendants. The lady Clarice expressed an extreme of indignation, but there was nothing that could be done. She told me that S. Caterina was one of the several Dominican convents that had sprung up around San Marco in the time of Fra Savonarola, and one which had his express commendation on account of its mortifications and its inexorable anti-Medicean temper. It was not pleasant to think of a child of the Medici in the hands of fanatical women such as these. There had been a phrensy of obliterating all the insignia of the family all over the city, and the palazzo had been given over to the trustees of minors as an office. Messer Zeffi brought gossip that Michelagnolo Buonorrotti had suggested that the palazzo should be razed and the space laid out as a piazza to be called *dé' Muli*, but he may never have said it, and he was going on with his work at San Lorenzo. We heard by and by that he was in great grief because his brother had died of the plague. So we learned of this and that, but nothing had substantiality. From the lofty upland of the villa there was at moments the sensation of all the world unrolled and of the centuries going by with Antaeus-like tread, and then one must listen to the tale of the quaverings of the new Florentine government. Messer Zeffi might deride, but he would not have bartered his vocation as a Florentine citizen for place among the seven stars.

At the time of the revolution the Florentine state had been, as I realised perfectly, a member of the League of Cognac; but the conspiracy against the Medici had been the work of the emperor's party within the walls, and there had certainly been some intrigue with the duke of Bourbon and hope of help from him. Now, the new government having two fears had pursued two courses. Peril was certain if Pope Clement and the emperor Charles came together as men said they must, and an envoy had been sent secretly from Florence to Spain to try and open negotiations. But it was not outside reckoning that the imperial army would return northwards and treat Florence in the same way as it had treated Rome, and so loyalty to the League was at the same time

industriously re-affirmed in order to insure the aid of the forces of France and Venice and Urbino should the need arise. It seemed to me an impotent and groping business.

It occupied the lady Clarice to debate about the jeopardy the city stood in from the resentment of the Pope himself, and she applied her mind to that in all its aspects, and especially to the invulnerable fact that the Pope was still God's Viceroy and the Father of the Faithful, who were as the sands of the sea not only in the whole world but within Florence itself. The Pope was the Pope, and it had been a moment of madness when Florence forgot that his downfall could be but transitory. It would be wise for the city to remember too that in the depths of his strange nature he was forever a Medici, and that he would stop at nothing to re-instate his family. And, if that wisdom were denied, there was the consideration that all which Florentine citizens had lost by the sack of Rome could only be made good by the new opportunities which would arise when the material position of the Papacy improved again: this being a prompting that would enlist many recruits for the Palleschi. On the other hand, the lady Clarice argued that Pope Clement himself had much need to be wary before he indulged in retaliation. In the first place he should remember Caterina, entirely at the mercy of unreliable passions: then there was all the property of the Medici over which the Florentine treasury had a hold, although it had not yet been confiscated: finally his Holiness drew ecclesiastical revenues from Florence and in his present impoverished state that must be a consideration. And the whole anarchy of circumstances was brought home to me whenever I thought of the Salviati family. His Holiness had no love for the lady Lucrezia, and her intrigues had certainly weighed something in the scale against Cardinal Passerini and Ippolito, yet her husband messer Jacopo was confidential secretary to Pope Clement, and said to be omnipotent.

Francesco Zeffi was restless and disquieted about it all, and with little mind as I saw for his pupils. He would discourse to me endlessly on the perfections of the Venetian constitution, that being, as I had discovered before, a matter of admiration for the Florentine theorists. And then one day he told me that the unhappiest man in the city had died, not of the plague, but of an explicit disinclination to go on living in a world so inglorious. This was messer Niccolò Machiavelli, known to me by repute, and who, it seemed, had applied to be restored to the post of secretary of the Republic which he had held before the return of the Medici. A great majority of the Council had voted against his applica-

tion on the ground that he had taken the pay of the Medici, some saying also he was of irreligious life, and others this and that.<sup>8</sup> It was true, said m<sup>sr</sup> Zeffi that he had accepted from the Cardinal Giulio the office of chronicler and had been employed by him on some minor embassies too, but the man had no private fortune and we all have to live, and this one was at soul a truer patriot and of loftier intelligence than those who would decry him. He had passed away, in his house on the left bank of the river, within a fortnight of his rejection. The lord Filippo, who had visited him one nightfall hearing of his sickness, had found him in a lethargy among ill conditions, and poverty very evident. His grown sons, said m<sup>sr</sup> Zeffi, were idle and of ill-repute, and a rabble of younger children to be fed and clothed—were it wonder that this Niccolò had decided that life was needlessly long? M<sup>sr</sup> Francesco then asked me if, when in Florence, I had ever had sight of this one's manuscript, dubbed *Il Principe*,<sup>9</sup> and I saying not, he brought me in a few days' time a scrivener's copy belonging to the lady Clarice, which he had her leave to fetch from the palazzo Strozzi.

I found the argument of the script not easy to follow for there was no system of thought, but I was able to say in due course that I could understand the ill-will this writing had brought to its author, for the rich would suppose he taught the deprivation of property and the poor be sure he taught the deprivation of liberty: but I added that I did not discover the infamy with which I knew messer Machiavelli had been charged, because he seemed to me to take for granted that what he says about human motives was only to be comprehended alongside a firm belief in God's purposes. All m<sup>sr</sup> Zeffi's wrinkles deepened at this, and he made answer that the truth was this script was of an esoteric nature, and that Niccolò Machiavelli had been too heedless of reputation in giving the vulgar such a chance to misconstrue him, and that too many copies of the original which he had presented to the lord Lorenzo were in circulation. I then asked the wherefore of the dedication to the lord Lorenzo de' Medici, saying that the father of the duchessina seemed to me to have had but little likeness to the *Principe* to whom the Machiavelli's soul had given predilection. M<sup>sr</sup> Zeffi said this was so, and he doubted if the lord Lorenzo had ever set eyes on the author and on a certainty he had never read what was written; but alongside the writer's high purpose was perhaps the necessity to bring himself to notice and to obtain some employment under the new conditions. Yet, putting that urge into its rightful place, continued Francesco Zeffi, it was to be comprehended that this dedicatory letter had a general application, and that,

in making the picture of the man who should save his country rather than his own soul, the writer had seen in the Medici the family which might one day give birth to the true patrician—he who, unhesitating and unflinching, should bind together and bring regeneration to this distracted land.

What the tutor of the Strozzi said about *Il Principe* has remained with cameo-like clarity in my memory, for he went on to tell me that, in these later years, Niccolò Machiavelli had wondered if, in the young Magnifico, the lord Ippolito, he might not live to see his dream a reality. He had written not long since to messer Vettori that he loved his country as his very soul, and none might disbelieve it: and while the denial by the Signoria of the means of living had doubtless hastened on his end, yet he had aged, as it were in a night, when the news of the sack of Rome had reached the city, and Francesco Zeffi pronounced that he believed hope had finally left him when, standing in the crowd, he had beheld Ippolito ride out of the palazzo Medici for the San Gallo gate.

In these, and many other discussions, the days slipped away, and when the summer and the autumn came to an end, we learned that there had been both French and English envoys in Florence, the one pertinacious in reminder to the Signoria that Caterina was of cousinship to king Francis and her welfare ever the king's concern, and the other urging on behalf of king Henry of England that negotiations with his Holiness should be attempted. In November, too, a dignified letter of remonstrance arrived from Parma, signed by all the Cardinals there: and all this had its outcome, for, on the sixth day of December, we heard simultaneously that Caterina had been taken to the comfortable convent of the Murate under the walls at the end of the via Ghibellina, and that the Signoria had made solemn affirmation of its devotion to the Holy See. A few days later the news came on wings from Rome that his Holiness had left San Angelo in disguise and that he had reached the town of Orvieto on the boundary between the papal states and Tuscany, and where (so messer Zeffi asserted) thirty-two Popes had taken refuge before him.

The lord Filippo Strozzi came to us in the new year (1529) from Rome and Orvieto. The business of raising the ransom of 400,000 ducats for Pope Clement had been committed to him, and many lives had hung on

the success of his efforts. Monsignor Giberti, Jacopo Salviati, Galeotto and Malatesta de' Medici,<sup>10</sup> together with Ippolito and Alessandro, had all been demanded as hostages, but the Cardinals Trivulzi and Pisani had been accepted in the place of the two boys; more than once had the death of these six, in confinement, first at the Rocca di Papa, and then in the Cancelleria, been threatened, and that not idly.

It was impossible to make any literal picture of outraged Rome in the imagination. When I saw it later I was astonished that the lord Filippo had spoken of the havoc so moderately, although at the time his account had sounded to be an exaggeration. It seems that the imperial army had gone into summer quarters in the Alban and the Sabine hills, and when they returned in September they had subjected the city to a second sack, their officers being unable to restrain them. The palazzo S. Pietro alone had escaped destruction from the first because the prince of Orange had taken up his quarters there, and the library was intact, although Raffaello Sanzi's tapestries had been stolen from the Sixtine chapel and much else of inestimable value had disappeared. I learned for the first time that the duke of Bourbon, who had led the army when it swept past Florence, had been killed by a cannon ball in the first assault on Rome, and that the prince of Orange was now in supreme command.

I had never been inside the dark fortress of San Angelo, but I knew well by sight the white pillars of the little loggia which Pope Julius had made, very high up, directly over the bridge, and more than once, looking across the river from the end of the via dei Banchi, I had seen Pope Leo sitting there at supper on summer evenings; for since the time of the Borgia Pope, who had completed the covered passage, it had been the usage of successive Pontiffs to escape from the formalities that surrounded them in the palazzo S. Pietro and to take their ease here with their intimates. A separate household looked after the range of rooms, and there was even a chapel which Michelagnolo Buonorrotti had designed for Pope Julius, and a bathroom after the classical model which Pope Clement himself had been prophetically at pains to establish. Nothing could be more adequate than all this, the lord Filippo cynically declared, and the Pope's haste to exchange it for the austerities of Orvieto at the first possible moment was, he mocked, scarcely to be understood. However those in control were possibly not sorry to be relieved of responsibility for him. He was warned of the insecurity of the roads and was advised to stay at least for a short time in Rome, but there was certainly connivance when he left San Angelo by night in the

clothes of his major-domo and found the lord Luigi Gonzaga waiting for him in the Neronian fields with a troop of arquebusiers as escort.

The lord Filippo had a talent for representation which was all the more graphic because of its benign malevolence, and the lady Clarice, weak as she now was, did nothing but laugh when he made Orvieto his theme, she encouraging him to return to it continually. I asked messer Zeffi one day if he thought it credible that his Holiness could really be in such straits, but he said that it was all true, for his friend Giachinotto Serragli, who had a small post in the palazzo Publico, had been sent to Orvieto on some tentative mission, and had come back with just the same tale of scath and desolation.

The small city of Orvieto was one of the bishoprics of the Cardinal Ridolfi although of course he had never resided there. It was lodged on the summit of a lofty and precipitous platform of rock which rose sheer from the plain. It was a natural fortress, and had been the sanctuary of discredited Popes for centuries, but for decades no thought had been given to keeping the papal palazzo either in order within or repair without, and now in his need Pope Clement must bivouac in chambers with the daylight showing through the rafters overhead, with torn and stained hangings on the walls, and with nothing but wooden stools to offer to envoys who came from the ends of the earth. Once, it seems, there had been a noble papal audience chamber with an imposing outside stairway; but this was now a ruin, and huddled across the end of the open space between it and the Cathedral was the residence itself. The lord Filippo told how he mounted steps under a doorway and then, turning to the left, traversed one, two, and three miserable chambers, finding his Holiness in bed in the fourth with an improvised and crooked canopy above him: beyond was a little chapel, and its sacristy led into the Cathedral choir. It was possible to have a very definite picture of it all, with a vivid little Cathedral flaunting itself above a wilderness of grass-grown paving-stones, and with the icy wind beating like a scourge round every corner.<sup>11</sup>

The lord Filippo said that in no other place had he experienced wind so freezing and so persistent, and it would even discover his Holiness in bed, and move the curtains and attempt to float the coverlet. The Pope was ill with his feet badly swollen, and it must have been a strange adventure for those familiar with his fine features and alert bearing and with all the pomp of S. Pietro to traverse a desert, to climb a precipice, to trail through squalid streets, and to find an old man with a white beard and sunken eyes huddled against the wall at the end of a succession

of mouldy chambers. The lady Clarice surmised that some of this wretchedness might well be mitigated only that it served the Holy Father's purpose better to let noise of his martyrdom abroad in all Europe. However that might have been, there was no ignoring that the conditions of this winter in Orvieto were terrible, with a shortage of fuel and provisions and even of drinking water. When Pope Clement went abroad for the first time (and that afoot and in a tattered cloak) it was to inspect the excavation of a new well which he had summoned Antonio da Sangallo to sink for the garrison.

His Holiness, stripped of all his States and his possessions, and lacking even decent vestments in which to celebrate Mass, remained in Orvieto for 6 months, and during that time the ambassadors of the kings of the earth crowded to the rock to strive for his favour, while baser princes and most cities hastened to felicitate him on his release from captivity, the lord duke of Urbino coming in person among others: and this audience must have needed a peculiar chicane, there being little doubt but that duke Francesco could have saved Rome had he chosen to march. The scattered Cardinals, Prelates and courtiers too gradually made their way back to the Holy Father's side, nearly all being as impoverished as himself: but he had need of all the help his secretariat and the Curia could afford him, for affairs pressed on him from every quarter, the English envoys in particular being no less than three times in Orvieto over the business of the annulment of the marriage of their king with the princess of Aragon.

This matter of the unhappiness of an aunt did not weigh with the emperor Charles when he came to the conclusion (as he presently did) that he must reinstate the Papacy. It was argued at Le Selve that the actual reasons which swayed him were more probably the danger of both France and England establishing Patriarchates of their own: or, more potently, the consideration that the empire as well as the Papacy were consequent on Rome, and that the imperial authority could scarcely survive if the ecclesiastical electorate in Germany were secularised. It was certain that if the Papacy perished the empire would perish with it. We learned that the news of the fall of Rome had reached Spain during the rejoicings for the birth of the emperor's heir, and the lord Baldassare Castiglione was always convinced that the sack had been both beyond the emperor's knowledge and his wish. I knew how profound the lord Baldassare's unhappiness must be about it all, and the lord Filippo said that he was more to be commiserated with than any man in Europe, for he was certain that Pope Clement's secret and overmastering desire in



this crisis was to be revenged on Florence, and that if he could be convinced that collaboration with the League would serve him better to this end than a treaty with the emperor, his envoy in Spain would have a sorry time and have to look dishonour in the face more than once. The League was making beguiling promises to the Pope, and the French army, which had long been in the neighbourhood of Bologna, was marching south on Naples through the Romagna.<sup>12</sup>

Orvieto may have experienced all the rigours of winter weather, but that at Le Selve rivalled it. There was no lack of fuel however, and the lady Clarice spent a great part of each day lying on a couch by the hearth in her own chamber and watching the flames with eyes which grew daily more enigmatical. Her spirit was gradually withdrawing itself from the detail and accidents of this life, and her children began to realise this remoteness with a sense of desolation. It even affected the lord Filippo as he came and went, and he would bring her gifts, she rousing herself to thank him and to examine them with a show of animation. One day, on his return from a stealthy expedition to Florence, he put a finely wrought ring with a great pearl in her palm telling her that the goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini had returned to his birthplace from Rome, where there was no business doing, and had opened a shop in the Mercato Nuovo.<sup>13</sup> Like all her family the lady Clarice had the instinctive taste for such things which is perhaps an imperfect intellectual state, and later in the day, as she lay gazing at the ring now on her first finger, she observed that she often thought the work of this Cellini deficient in dignity in spite of his prodigious skill, and that it never suggested to her the beauty which insures a dream. I was holding up my embroidery to the fading light to gaze at the effect of a new device of stitchery, and she suddenly smiled at me with great sweetness saying that I was really the greater artist.

I was unusually busy with my needle at Le Selve, for Maria Strozzi, the eldest of the lady Clarice's daughters, was almost of marriageable age and was to be given in due time to her cousin Lorenzo, the brother of the Cardinal Ridolfi, and a great bale of linen had long ago been fetched from Rheims and sent to some of the convents to be made into embroidered tablecloths and towels. It was on the more personal effects that I was engaged, and I had to my credit the pillow-cases for the nuptial bed in crimson silk wrought with pure gold, and recollect the pleasure I took in a pin-cushion stitched with pearls, a green reticule embossed with

silver thread, and several netted caps adorned with fringes and jewels. A Lombard coffer of black varnished leather stood in one of the upper chambers and here each article was placed as I finished it. Maria, Luigia, and Maddelena had delight in coming up the stairs with me to turn out the contents of the chest when I allowed it, and to deck and preen themselves. Besides the newly arrived infant Pietro, the other five boys were all at Le Selve, and messer Zeffi was helped in his task of tuition by some of the Fathers at the monastery. The eldest son, Leone, now 13 years of age, was to go to the University at Padua when an opportunity of an escort arose, and he went away in March of the new year (1528) taking with him a letter from myself to be delivered to Monsignor Bembo.

I do not think that anyone except myself realised that the lady Clarice was dying. It was repeated continually that when the spring came she would be better, and indeed that might have seemed to be so, for there were occasionally noons when she would lie in the open air on the balcony at the corner of the villa and would talk with much of her old vitality. A book of the Offices of Our Lady was always beside her, and I had envied it more than anything else she possessed, for its covers were of crystal and silver and the pages within of blue-tinted vellum and the lettering of gold. She took it in her hands one day and told me that it had belonged to the dower of her grandmother Clarice Orsini and that she thought Caterina should have it rather than another. I knew that she herself was not deceived about herself when she gave it therewith into my keeping unto the day of Caterina's marriage; laughing presently as she watched me fold a piece of silk around the little volume, and asking if I had heard that the duke of Urbino had sought to commend himself to his Holiness at Orvieto by a proposal to betroth Caterina to his son Guidobaldo.

This led to further talk about Caterina. Paola had now returned to her with a 2nd waiting-maid, and the lord Filippo had been told that the child was occupying the cell in which the lady Caterina Sforza, mother of the lord-captain Giovanni de' Medici, had lived during the last years of her life. The Murate had a high reputation as a well-appointed convent, the nuns coming from all the first families in Florence; and the lady Clarice said to me that Caterina was in kindly hands now, would be well trained in accomplishments and in deportment, and no doubt have tutors provided too, for her uncle, the duke of Albany, had sent a liberal sum for her maintenance from her estates in France. I learned for the first time that this said lord Giovanni de' Medici (he whom

I had heard named long ago as a possible heir to Florence) was dead. He had been killed in a small skirmish outside Mantua while marching his troops southward to Rome in the united attempt to intercept the imperial army. The lady Maria Salviati, his widow, with their son, the boy Cosimo, was still in Venice where she had taken refuge from the plague some time ago.

As she spoke of these two children of the Medici I was sure that the mind of the lady Clarice had returned to the question of the Florentine heritage from which it had so long seemed to be detached. It was a day of a miraculous clarity, and within the immensity of the circle of the celestial-blue mountains every detail of the plain was defined with a tenderness of colour. The garden where our first parents dwelt could not have been a fairer place, and some understanding came to me what exile from this Eden might mean to those who claimed its over-lordship. Florence, with its pale considered grace, was a pendant to the chain of the sinuous silver river: far away on the left, set in lustrous meadows, and clothed with an ample air, were the walls and roofs of Prato: Poggio a Caiano on its eminence had all the pride of bliss in its own perfection: I made out the orchards below Careggi and glimpsed the villa itself, and believed that I could discern Castello and Petriaiia. The Medici were writ large over all this vast landscape where the morning glimmered. It was an hour that held all time, and the lady Clarice was so motionless that I leaned forward once from my seat with a sudden apprehension that she was dead.

She died very quietly about a week later, and was carried through the dark pillars of the grove and up the cobbled ascent into the cool twilight of the church.<sup>14</sup> I stood afterwards in the sunshine in front of the villa and looked at the slopes below me where the red soil had burst into a riot of growth, rich and green. I thought how strange it was that anyone, and she beyond others, should die in the month of May, be lifeless in the midst of this profusion of life.

Madama Selvaggia, the mother of the lord Filippo, had been at Le Selve since the month of February, and it was in her keeping that he left his family when he went away to Lyons for his own better safety. As soon as a fitting occasion arose I told madama that I had, some time since, written to Monsignor Bembo in Padua asking him if he could suggest another way of life for me, because it was only haphazard which had brought me to Le Selve, and I saw no certainty of resuming the

care of Caterina. She said much that was kind, reminding me that I was a Strozzi and must always feel at home under a Strozzi roof, but I was at this time much distraught about the future.

I was now thirty-eight years of age, and the woman I saw in the mirror had known many things that I had long forgotten. She had known of senses alive, and the spirit which holds communion with them: of the significance of thoughts unnamed, and the meaning of unspoken words. She had known enchantment, known of fear and hope making a tumult in the breast, and had fought ruthless battles with the pain that was destroying her soul. All this, in full measure pressed down, she had experienced, and experience had been exchanged by inexorable time for a seriousness which had come to be an incurable malady. For the grave woman in the mirror there seemed to be no place any longer among the accidents of dramatic lives. And I feared that Monsignor Bembo would think so too. I had written to him with much dubiety, but he knew all the courts of Italy, and consciousness told me that he had long guessed my secret. I trusted him egregiously about that when I did not really trust him to trouble greatly now with any request from me. I felt that my failure in life had been too wan to keep alive any flame of living interest in the memory of those who had gone far since we were all poor and unknown together at Urbino. The lord Baldassare, as I had twice proved, had the rare quality which can sometimes resist the market value of people, but few in this world have a like nobility.

The spring became the summer at Le Selve, and messer Zeffi, who was now our main link with the world, told us that his Holiness had been starved out of Orvieto. He had long been petitioned to return to Rome, but the disorder and want that still obtained there, and the uncertainty how the war in Naples would go, made that impossible. All the world had seen the French general, the lord Odet de Foix, march victoriously south through the Abruzzi and Apulia, and in July he was entrenched before Naples. His Holiness in the meanwhile had gone in June to Viterbo, now restored to his possession, and he was living there in the palazzo of Cardinal Farnese who had left Parma some months since and was now legate in Rome. The fate of Naples, which the prince of Orange was defending, would, as all could understand, decide whether the Pope must make peace with the emperor, or whether he would join himself to the League, and in August, while this hung in the balance, a letter from Padua, which I had never really expected to receive, arrived for me in Florence at the palazzo of the Salviati and was

very courteously forwarded to Le Selve by a horseman. I had a great warmth of gratitude in my heart for Pietro Bembo even as I held the packet in my hand, and when I had read it to the end I felt how completely a gesture of friendship may in a moment transform the whole world.

Honoured lady and dear friend

When the knowledge of the convulsions in Florence came to me last year, believe me that you had an especial place in my thoughts, for I wondered how you would find yourself established. Then by your letter (which Leone Strozzi duly delivered) I learned how you were placed, and I thought that in this present turmoil of all Italy you were not unfortunate. But I heard from the young Leone a month or so since that his mother has died, and I realise that the Strozzi family is now without a helmsman and that you will be dreading to drift with it. I had admiration for the lady Clarice because of her wifely staunchness and the courage of her expedients. May she rest in peace.

I know that if our beloved Baldassare Castiglione had not been so far away that you would have turned to him, and that he would, quietly and inevitably, have produced some solution of existence for you as he has done before. It was only the due of our long friendship that, failing him, you should turn to me. I am grateful for your faith in me, and my hope is that what I now propose will commend itself to your full acceptance.

It is often the obvious that succeeds best, and it was most obvious that I should make your plight known to that omnipotent great lady the marchioness Isabella d'Este. A long interval elapsed before I heard from her, but she had occupied it in busying herself on your behalf. She now writes by the hand of her secretary, saying that she had always known about you from her sister-in-law the duchess Elisabetta, and that she had more than once thought to invite you to her own court at Mantua because of your great skill with the needle. Even now that temptation assailed her, she says, but she has been concerned to find a lady of fitting years and demeanour who would be acceptable as a duenna to the lady Giulia Gonzaga, who was with her in Rome before the sack, and whom she had married to the lord Vespasiano Colonna. This lady Giulia, who has the titles of countess of Fondi and duchess of Trajetto, is just widowed, and even now but sixteen years of age, and she has a step-daughter, the lady Isabella Colonna, who is a few months younger than herself. The two are heirs to great wealth and estates, and are singularly unprotected, whether in the castello of Pagliano beyond the Alban hills, or in the palazzo at Fondi over the Neapolitan border. The lord Vespasiano had scarcely been buried in March when his widow and daughter were besieged at Pagliano by Colonna kinsmen who coveted it for themselves, and the lord Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga had to ride with troops to his sister's rescue. If you accept the post that is now offered you it may perhaps mean more of adventure or misadventure than has so far been your lot, for in the

orbit of young, beautiful, and wealthy women events are always sure to abound. The lady Giulia has now been communicated with and has returned answer to Mantua that she will await your arrival with much pleasant anticipation, and for the added reason that you have been recommended to her by the lord Ippolito de' Medici.

The emergence of Ippolito into the affair will surprise you very much, and I expect that, after he left Massa for Parma and disappeared beyond your cognisance, you have often wondered about him. I have wondered too, and have made it my affair to be acquainted with his movements.

Their Eminences Farnese, Cibo, and Ridolfi had to leave Parma for Orvieto before Christmas because his Holiness had summoned all the Curia. Alessandro Farnese wrote to me that they had encompassed Ippolito and Alessandro with tutors and had exhorted them to patience and to prudence; so when I heard of a sudden that the two Medici were in Ravenna, I thought it clear that I, a Venetian as well as an old friend, should be there too.

You will probably not know that, since the League of Cambrai, Ravenna had been part of the papal dominion, nor that the state of Venice, as a member of the Holy League, has lately seized both it and Cervia, while the duke or Ferrara has entered on Modena and Reggio: they have one and all refused to return these towns to his Holiness unless he joins the League. What was clear at once to me was, that Ippolito, beating about with his young inexperience, thought he saw in the League a means of regaining Florence, and that the League saw in him a means of embarrassing the Pope. I had heard of the attempt to decoy him to Savoy, and I thought it not improbable that, as he had been headed off in the east, an effort was now being made to draw him to the west.

By the waters, and among the mists of Ravenna, I found the boy I had left in Rome grown to manhood. It was not easy to resume contact across so great a space of time, and I came to him no longer as the man of important affairs, but as an elderly scholar and antiquary only. But he cast his spell on me and engaged my sympathy, and his realisation of this, together with the prestige my family has in the city, enabled me to persuade him that nothing was to be gained by intrigue nor by any course of action, and that those who sought to involve him would only make him a dupe: to specify would be a lengthy matter, and it is enough to say that I think I saved him from the results of his too great impetuosity.

He will always construct vividly in his imagination and believe in the living reality of his creations: inside him stretch immense plains without horizon, for the adventure he thinks of as Florence is rather an adventure which shall confirm him in an inner vision and be an authoritative enterprise of the soul. So he stands on the threshold of life as others have stood before him, and I permit myself to wonder how far virtue will sustain him when he closes in battle with the elemental forces against which the vital energy of man has to be spent. He has had his first skirmish with them and it has tinged him with a

certain subtlety; for he is far from naïve. It surprised me a little, for instance, that Alessandro should be with him and be included by him in all diversions. But when I said some words to this effect, he made answer dryly that there were persons whom it was prudent to keep under observation. His manner to his cousin, who conspicuously fears and envies him, is perfectly urbane. The unpleasant boy who came from Florence to be installed in the palazzo S. Pietro has grown to an unpleasant maturity, but he is healthy, and not without parts.

I rode out from Ravenna with the two, and when I parted with them to go my own way north, Ippolito gratified my ever-overweening vanity by extracting a promise that I would send him a copy of my *Volgare Lingua*. They were to stop in Faenza in the palazzo of the Manfredi, and Monsignor Bernardo de' Medici was to come there to meet them from Forlì. It was conveyed to me later that their stay had been prolonged, and had led to some show of uneasiness on the part of the Signoria of Florence: but, however that may be, the next news I had of them was that they were both in Turin and about to cross the mountains to Chambéry. His Holiness must have been both angry and alarmed that he had been defied, and a summons no one could disregard reached the two roving youths. In the month of May they arrived in Viterbo. Here Ippolito learnt that a marriage had been arranged for him with the lady Isabella Colonna, and he was sent presently to Pagliano to commend himself to her.

I tell you this at length, for it is imperative that you should understand the circumstances among which you will find yourself. It is never possible to keep in the memory the relationships one to another of the immense tribe of the Colonna, but there are two branches of the family, and the lord Vespasiano was head of the elder branch and the Cardinal Pompeo is his cousin. Notwithstanding the family tradition, he was always on friendly terms both with Pope Leo and with Pope Clement, and when he joined the Cardinal in the raid on S. Pietro two years ago his Holiness found it unforgiveable. The raid you may remember was in September, and, in the previous June, the lord Vespasiano had married as his second wife the lady Giulia Gonzaga who had been brought to Rome in the train of the marchioness of Mantua.

All Europe knows that the lady Isabella d'Este has never yet failed to get anything in this world on which she has really set her mind, and he was not I think many months old when she decided on the Cardinalate as the career for her second son Ercole Gonzaga. She came to Rome with her train of lovely ladies directly after the coronation of Pope Leo, and I still have the liveliest memory of that merry time, for Pope and Cardinals vied with one another in the splendour of the festas they made for her. Notwithstanding, she had to return to Mantua with her purpose unaccomplished, for his late Holiness was unexpectedly firm in refusing the red hat to a boy of seven years. The marquis Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, our duchess Elisabetta's somewhat unmanageable brother, died, as you know, ten years or so ago, but his

widowed marchioness who is now a woman of fifty never lost sight of her fixed ambition for her son. A new Pope meant a new opportunity for her, and the tiara had scarcely been placed on Pope Clement's head when she borrowed the Montefeltro palazzo from her nephew and arrived in Rome again, and again accompanied by a court of sirens. It took her two years to gain her point, and it was not until the month of May, just before the sack, that his Holiness capitulated and gave Ercole Gonzaga the red hat. Thus the marchioness was actually in Rome during the sack itself, but she and her ladies escaped all outrage for they were now entrenched in the palazzo of the Colonna and the property of these good imperialists was spared—it was entirely of a piece with her whole existence that the lady Isabella should have felt the palazzo at the foot of the hill of the Quirinale to be a more fitting setting for herself than the less imposing one in the Corso, and, so feeling, should have contrived that the Cardinal Pompeo made offer of the loan of it. She is an altogether admirable woman, and it was in the shade of the cypresses in the Colonna garden that the lord Vespasiano asked for the hand of the lady Giulia. When the marchioness brought the young girl to Rome she can scarcely have hoped for an alliance of so much consequence for her.

The lady Giulia Gonzaga is the youngest of the nine children of the lord Ludovico Gonzaga of Sabbioneta. They are a younger branch of the family, which diverged two or three generations back. Of three brothers, the eldest is Luigi, who is in the service of the emperor Charles and now with the imperial army, and the youngest is Cardinal Pirro Gonzaga. Three of the sisters have been given in marriage, and two are nuns, and it is rumoured that the lady Giulia had begun to turn her youthful thoughts that way too, when the lady Isabella's offer to bring her to Rome arrived in the Sabbioneta household. You should be prepared to find in the duchess of Trajetto a little pedantry, perhaps, and a decided force of will. I have been told that the marchioness Isabella had some trouble in bringing her to an acquiescence in the nuptials, she protesting against a husband forty years older than herself. All say that she is of an exceeding loveliness.

The lord Vespasiano Colonna had as his first wife the lady Bianca Appiano, and their daughter must be the greatest heiress in Italy. I cannot but apprehend that his Holiness felt a surprise (which I am sure he was able to conceal) when the lord Vespasiano arrived in Orvieto to excuse himself for his past apostasy and with the peace-offering of this alliance in his hand. I myself have a little astonishment about it all too, yet recall that in old days the lord Vespasiano had a great predilection for the boy Ippolito, would encourage his spirit and daring, and would wish he had a son like him. The Colonna was not only a soldier, he was a scholar too, and a great gentleman. When I heard that he was dead this last March, I knew that Italy was the poorer. His testament, made after he returned home ill from the campaign of Naples, gives formal consent to the marriage of the lady Isabella and Ippolito.<sup>15</sup> A great career opens out for this (latter) one. He will not only be independent in purse, but



he will of a certainty be made duke of Trajetto in right of his wife. He has now been to Pagliano and, when the period of the first mourning is over, I see you embroiled in the festivities of a princely wedding. Of the lady Isabella herself I know nothing except that she has had little training in accomplishments and loves rather the life of the open air and every manner of sport.

I am at last at an end, and you will say that Pietro Bembo has grown too garrulous. But I anticipate that all this juvenescence will not be easy to deal with, and judge that you will sometimes find yourself without authority face to face with uneasy circumstances.

I am writing to the Salviati family on your behalf, and you must hold yourself ready to start for Rome when opportunity is made for you. You are to go to the Colonna palazzo there, and you will wait until an escort comes from Pagliano.

Of my own life and affairs I have left myself no room to speak, and would only say that peace and happiness attend your old friend. My adored Morosina bears with all my frailties, and only shakes her head with a forgiving smile when I add to my growing collection a manuscript which has cost far too much.<sup>16</sup> But I am vowed lately to a greater economy, for we have added a daughter to our responsibility for two lusty sons. The young female is named Helena, and we are convinced she will out-shine all her sex in beauty and charm by the time she requires a dowry and a husband.

PAGLIANO



# PAGLIANO

I DID not come to Rome until October (1528) when a company of Florentine merchants were making the journey with hired men-at-arms to protect them, for all the land was in turmoil. Several ladies were travelling with their husbands, and I had with me two tiring-maids and pack-mules to carry my amplified wardrobe: I realising that I must make a certain prestige for myself if my position at Pagliano was to be rendered tolerable. The weather was wet and windy, and the fatigues and discomforts of the way were considerable, and I was much disappointed when we came to Viterbo and I found that the Pope had left for Rome in the previous week taking Ippolito and Alessandro with him. I learned that the French had raised the siege of Naples in August owing to a pestilence which broke out in the army; Pope Clement was thus obliged to decide on peace with the emperor, and the prince of Orange had persuaded him to return to S. Pietro. He left Viterbo with all his court and a thousand soldiers.

I hoped we should attain to Rome in the daylight in order that I might discover the truth about the tales I had heard, and all the company having, I think, the same curiosity, it was so contrived that we reached the porta del Popolo before noon. It was with eyes which scarcely believed their own witness that I rode with my own small following down the length of the deserted Corso, for there was not an unscarred dwelling to be seen, some were roofless, others were without doors and windows, frequently a pile of stones was all that was left of a noble building. As I turned away at the end of the Corso I saw that the Montefeltro palazzo was a partial ruin, and the palazzo of the Colonna, alongside the church of SS. Apostoli, alone seemed intact in this wilderness of devastation.

I thought everybody very much shaken in mettle by all that had been experienced, and even the major-domo, who received me with punctilious dignity, let himself be betrayed presently into loquaciousness. But my mind closed like an oyster on it all, for it was abomination beyond any stretch of imagining. There were several days before the escort for me arrived from Pagliano and I was advised not to venture abroad. But I thought this betrayed too much trepidation now that the Pope had returned to Rome, and I went forth one morning with the mules and

my maids and men, and sought out, in the campo dei Fiore and elsewhere, some of the Florentine ladies with whom I had travelled. They were all exclamation at the condition of affairs, saying that merchants were coming to Rome from Venice and all parts of Italy, but it was useless to open shops when there were no purchasers: most of the Cardinals were ruined, and there was scarcely a woman of any degree in the city. As I made my way back through the desolate streets where not an equipage was to be seen, I realised that the Rome I had known had gone for ever. It seemed to be an omen that on the day the Pope re-entered the walls, the rain, so I was told, had not ceased to pour down from morning onwards.

I was glad to leave the misery of it all behind me. A small army of horsemen came for me from Pagliano, and as we rode along in the autumn sunshine, I learned from the agreeable bravo in charge of them that they were in the papal service, for that after the lord Luigi Gonzaga had been recalled to the imperial forces, his Holiness had sent the captain Girolamo Matteo and eight hundred soldiers to make a garrison. I was warned that the day might not be without incident, for all the country we were to pass through had been in constant agitation ever since the rescue of Pagliano by the lord Luigi. The lord Napoleone Orsini, the Abbate of Farfa, seems to have had designs on the inheritance too, and now he and the lord Sciarra Colonna, the original aggressor, were at constant warfare with one another, and Tivoli, Agnani, Rieti, and many other towns had been laid waste.

We did at one time see the glinting of spears and a large body of men moving in the distance, but otherwise the day passed without any untoward occurrence. It was a very long ride, for although we had started early and had made but an hour's halt at midday, it was late afternoon when we reached Pagliano. After crossing the great waste of the wilderness outside Rome, we had come between the two groups of the Alban and the Sabine hills to a land lately ravaged, as could be seen, but where cultivation was attempted and where a stream flowed over stones and poplars grew beside it. The track climbed a little here, and dipped there, and on every hand were eminences crowned with an inevitable castello and little towns hanging on to the hillsides. At length bleak mountains on the left drew nearer and grew taller, and a misty plain unrolled itself at their feet. Isolated in the plain was a cone-shaped hill which rose sheer and looked impregnable.

Given the sufficient garrison it now had, Pagliano was probably impregnable. Peasants gathering in the last of the vintage were scattered among the vines on the lower slopes, and there was chatter exchanged with my escort as we clattered up the steep road to the walls above; once within them my head began to reel at the proximity of a humanity so redundant and so exuberant. There was a strong guard at the outer gate, and as we climbed alleys to the second circle of walls every window on either hand seemed to have its half-dozen heads on bodies thrust out over the sills, and every doorway had its quorum which included soldiers who were everywhere. I rode up and down often enough in the next few years, but I do not recollect that this protuberant population ever seemed to diminish, nor did I ever see a sign of occupation in anybody's hand. The dwellings themselves looked terribly wanting in decent repair, and, with the exception of the soldiery, rags were the only garments; it was a display of a greater poverty than I had yet encountered, but laughter mingled everywhere with the incessant gabble; I did not see a gloomy face. Tired as I was, it was impossible not to laugh too and feel that the fact of being alive at all is in itself a true jest.

After the second guardroom was passed we were among fortifications, and then we had climbed to a third portal with a coat-of-arms carved over it and sir Matteo there to help me dismount. He told me pleasantly that travellers to Pagliano were always sighted afar off on the plain, and that the duchess had been watching my approach for the past hour. We were under a deep archway with the guardroom on the left and he showed me a door on the right and a narrow navel stair I must climb, and I emerged on to a great platform surrounded with battlements and with a vision of the arena of mountains lighted by the setting sun that took away my breath. Sentries were pacing to and fro. In the dark wall of the structure across the terrace a heavy door stood open, and lacqueys in black livery were outside it. Inside, was a crypt-like space with a low ceiling of rafters and a flooring of rough stone which day had nearly deserted. I was led across it by the major-domo, and up some shallow steps to a domed corridor where hangings were held aside; and with a word to my women to remain by the threshold, I advanced over the carpets of a long chamber. A slender girl rose from a chair by the hearth and came to meet me, followed by the two bloodhounds which had been drowsing at her feet. We had a courtesy for one another, and then she took my hand and kissed my cheek and led me to the fireside. Three young ladies who were in the embrasure of a window had risen when I came in, but the duchess did not beckon to them and they

resumed their seats. She and I stood looking at one another in the fading light.

In the years that lay ahead, and when the loveliness of Giulia Gonzaga had become a legend in Europe, I would recall to myself this October afternoon when I waylaid several impressions about her, but not the specific one that she was a full-sail beauty. The widowed duchess of sixteen years had a quickness that was very light and fresh, and her pallor seemed to speak of a great sensitiveness; but I did not mistake this atmospheric quality for pliability, because it was recognisable that she had fire and a sweeping command when she chose. For all her wistful grace, she had, I saw, confidence in her own expressiveness; and her engaging urbanity was adroit acceptance of me as a necessary condition of her estate but nothing more.

Pages brought torches, and the duchess herself came with me through the narrow passage-ways in the immense thickness of the walls to the chamber set apart for me and close to those she herself occupied. Even if I had felt more of fatigue than I did, I should not have failed to array myself presently in a robe of black baldachin trimmed with black hare, and to appear at the supper table; for my anxiety to see the lady Isabella was active, and I did not feel that sleep would be possible until I had satisfied it. The duchess sent one of her women by and by to say she was in readiness if I would accompany her; and I joined her little procession, she first behind the torches with a page to lift her albernia from the paving, and in mine own wake two of her ladies, youthful, demure and fair-spoken, and whom I learned to know by name in time. We came to the long chamber to which I had first been introduced, and even before the hangings were lifted was the clangour of voices.

About twenty persons were grouped around the hearth. They stood to one side and another as we came towards it, and a plump young woman who was standing with her back to the fire was left isolated. She had a shaven forehead, a profusion of black curls falling on to white shoulders very ungrudgingly displayed, and mocking black eyes which looked out from between thickset lashes under marked brows. She did not budge a step as we advanced, when I was made known to her her greeting certainly did not err on the side of punctilio, and she interrupted more than once with stupid waggery as the lady Giulia named the company to me one by one. My

heart had engaged the hope that, in the lady Isabella Colonna, Ippolito might find fortune perfected, and as we went to table in the next chamber it was only left for me to tell myself that marriage is after all not a constructed edifice which one approaches, nor a staple destiny which one accepts, but a problem of the hours as they go by, and a task of building values on nothingness, and that this was no more than a spoiled and unformed child. But when we were set at supper I knew that I could not convince myself of childishness, for here on the contrary was a woman, pulsing with the turbulence not to be mistaken for anything but the passion which stirs the balance of the soul. If the lady Isabella was all laughter which was tedious, it was because she was a breathing fire of both recollection and anticipation, and in the uncharted void between the two she was rudderless: I was obliged to say to myself too that she was indecorous. I was all speculation as I kept a deliberate silence while noisy conversation about the day's hunt was tossed to and fro, and the lady Giulia sat looking so remote in her pale distinction that it was almost as if she were poised for some enchanted flight.

I realised much as the hour wore on, and a great deal more the next day and in those that followed. There was first of all that which was apparent, then there was much that called for conjecture, and lastly there was some mystery which hung impalpably in the air. No one makes so many mistakes as those who act only on reflection, and I would remember that axiom when I found myself pausing continually to wonder if what I was about to do or say was well-considered.

The castello of Pagliano had been built with the paramount idea of defence, and was an oblong structure of great strength and no beauty, and with an inner citadel surmounting it. I had realised when I arrived on the battlemented platform which ran along the western front that it commanded an outlook on encircling mountains which was even more stupendous than the view from Le Selve, but it was not until sir Matteo took me to the top of the keep that the magnificence of the scene was fully disclosed. Then one saw that Pagliano was the focus of the pale disc of the great plain of the Sacco which was rimmed with heights rising beyond heights into the clouds, earth hardly distinguishable from heaven, and the whole a continuously shifting drama of colour and atmosphere. It was a far more audacious landscape than anything in Tuscany, and it made a chaos of the imagination. Sir Matteo told me that nearly all the plain we saw and much of the mountain-sides were Pagliano lands, and I said to myself that it was an inheritance a god might envy. On a clear day there could be discerned, far in the west, a



subsidence of the Alban and Sabine ranges on to the plain, and through this gap ran the road to the Campagna and to Rome. My thoughts were forever with Ippolito, caged once more in the palazzo S. Pietro, but so soon, I reflected, to gain a freedom.

The rooms of the lady Giulia on the south side of this eyrie were not large, but with the exception of the long chamber everything was in fact on a somewhat cramped scale, and it was only wonderful that so large a household could find shelter within the limits of the walls: many a one slept I suspect at night-time in the town below. The ladies of the household had, I thought, been chosen rather as companions for the lady Isabella than for the lady Giulia, and I must have come into their midst as Age itself, for nobody was over twenty-two years old. The lady Giulia had brought her old nurse from Sabbioneta, and the housekeeper too was of middle age, but with those exceptions feminine youth was effulgent. The ladies were mainly of the Colonna, two being bastard daughters of the lord Vespasiano himself and of the Cardinal Pompeo; others I surmised to be of similar origin. A considerable number of ladies was really needed, for everyone had not the tireless energy of the lady Isabella. She had the idle nature that must forever be doing something, and her passion for field sports was insatiable, so that every day, and sometimes twice a day, a party of riders had to be made up for a descent to the plain below, the ladies taking it in turns to be with her. The lady Giulia was of course sometimes with them too, and I more than once, for otherwise, unless one went all the steep way downhill to walk on the ramparts of the outer walls, there was no means of being in the air except to pace the confined platform of the terrace. But the young duchess loved as well as anything to be in her own wardrobe with her books, her clavichord and her silver lyre, and she was continually busied about affairs with her secretary, messer Gandolfo Porrino, or with letters to her own family; writing often with her own hand to her grandmother the lady Antonia del Balzo who seemed to be paramount with her, and to the lord Luigi Gonzaga her brother. Couriers were constantly to and fro, always reporting on their difficulties and on the country still everywhere disturbed.

The gentlemen of the household were those who had served the lord Vespasiano, and were of an elderly complexion, but the officers of the papal garrison and the two who belonged to the smaller Colonna forces were all young. Besides these were a few guests, remnants I think of the hospitality of the late duke, and derelicts of the sack. Messer Antonio Tebaldeo, ill and penniless, had been given sanctuary in the Colonna

palazzo in Rome and was now at Pagliano, and Francesco Molza, who seemed to have come through it nearly unscathed, had found his way there too with others: they had sorry tales to tell me of the fate of their fellow-poets, and of the scholars and artists whom Pope Clement no less than Pope Leo had gathered around him. Messer Casanova, they said, had died of the plague after begging in the streets, and Andrea Morone had died deserted in a tavern: the tales were endless, this one having been tortured and robbed, and that one having killed himself to escape a worse fate: the school of Raffaello Sanzi, they mourned, was dispersed for ever, those who had escaped having settled in Venice, in Friuli and other places, never to return.

It needed someone of longer experience than the duchess Giulia to give the right persuasion to the control of her composite retinue, and moreover the balance between function and aspect which makes daily life into an art would always have been upset by the incalculable irreverence of the lady Isabella: yet this one never flouted her stepmother, there was even a certain anxiety to stand well with her, and the duchess was careful on her part not to express discomfort at the exuberances. I was impatient for the day which should bring Ippolito again to Pagliano, for I could make no image of him as the convincing suitor of this restless girl. I had wondered a little on my arrival that the duchess, so lately widowed, should join the company at supper and remain afterwards as spectator of what went forward; but she said to me one day that she felt her presence insured a certain decorum, and, in excuse for the lady Isabella, that she had never known control as a child, for her mother was always of frail health, and the lord Vespasiano continually occupied with warfare in the service of the emperor and far afield in Lombardy and elsewhere.

The part which I had come from Tuscany to play was obviously to impose decorum too. I had brought silk damask from Florence, and I lost no time in establishing myself as an occupier of the long chamber with the task of embroidering hangings to be used at Fondi,<sup>1</sup> the duchess telling me that all there was somewhat poorly appointed. We should have gone south for the winter months, I understood, were it not that all the kingdom of Naples was a scene of terror, hundreds of the nobles suffering on the scaffold for their apostasy now that the rule of Spain was once more firmly established. The Cardinal Pompeo had advised that the poorly fortified town of Fondi in the plain was no place for

two women just now, but the lady Giulia said to me one day that the knowledge that she was a vassal of the emperor Charles was, she felt, after all her only security, for the garrison planted at Pagliano placed her otherwise entirely in the power of his Holiness, and she had certain proof that it was Pope Clement who had prompted the attack of Sciarra Colonna on her: and I did not disbelieve it.

The duchess and I were a good deal alone on these first autumn days while the others were abroad, and she would often come to the long chamber and pace up and down, her train sweeping the empty floor, the bloodhounds padding behind her, and her clear young voice chasing the sense of the inevitable that forever fills the spaces of an ancient room; and as I sat in the embrasure of the window and plied my needle in and out, the wind would croon over the darkening landscape, trundling loosely linked clouds that dropped weighty shadows on the bare sides of the mountain-ranges and on the plain below. I had a non-committal murmur occasionally for anything that seemed to call for some response, and I would be occupied with perpetual speculation as the slim, tensely held figure passed to and fro with nervous elasticity. I knew by this time that the lord Vespasiano's will had given her a great position as *patrona*<sup>2</sup> of his feudal possessions, and, for her lifetime, the better half of the revenue of the estates; but all this was for her widowhood only, and with my mind ranging over Italy and Europe (as far as my knowledge of them went), I wondered if a prince existed for whose hand this young duchess would be willing to exchange her dignity of independence. I marked that she had almost from day to day a growing estimate of her position, but instinct told me of an unacknowledged feeling of danger lying suspended behind her lively sense of the immediate. I seemed to know infallibly that she feared her own beauty: not its effect on others, but its eloquent image in the mirror calling to another self for the denial and dissolution of self. She shrank from that liability, and I was sensible that this accounted for her growing fascination, for she was like a piece of music ending on the dominant with its unanswered question and always leaving one unsatisfied.

It was not until a November morning, and after many attempts quietly frustrated, that I was able to make a direct approach to the subject of the marriage of Ippolito and the lady Isabella. The duchess and I were alone in her wardrobe, busy filling small bags of golden gauze with dried rose leaves strongly perfumed which had come with a

consignment of other things from Fondi. She told me that she had learned the manner of this drying and perfuming from her grandmother, and went on to say smiling that the lady Antonia had written from Sabbioneta that she was well-pleased to hear of my own arrival, for that his Holiness had appointed me to the charge of the lady Caterina de' Medici would silence all the chatter of the horde of the Colonna. I at once took advantage of the mention of Caterina to say that the lord Ippolito would be concerned to hear from me of his cousin's virtual imprisonment by the Signoria and of all that I had to tell him about Florence; but I drew no response from the lady Giulia, and I observed that her temples were flushed as she bent over the bowl of rose leaves and that her foot in its velvet shoe was tapping the carpet. However I was intending to persist, and I said lightly that some of these bags would serve for the dower chests of the lady Isabella, asking if there was any thought yet of the wedding festivities and whether they were to be at Pagliano or in Rome. The duchess said evenly that it was too soon to speak of any of this, and she rose abruptly as she spoke and took some calamint balls and threw them on the fire. Then she came back to the table, and as the fragrant fumes filled the chamber she abruptly opened the topic of Ippolito again herself, saying she doubted that her husband, the lord Vespasiano, if he were now alive, would persist with the marriage. I tried to maintain a look of unconcern, and she continued that, when the arrangement was made at Orvieto, it was understood that his Holiness would seek to come to terms with the emperor, and would conclude no peace that did not include a promise on the part of Cæsar to reinstate the Medici in Florence by force of arms if it were necessary, and to restore Ippolito his honours: now, said the lady Giulia, she had it from the Cardinal Pompeo that the negotiations which were going on would certainly involve the humiliation of Florence, but that his Holiness meant to install Alessandro there and not Ippolito. I felt at once with a sinking heart that this was probably all too true, and I wondered desperately if Ippolito knew of it. All I could find for answer was that perhaps Pope Clement thought Ippolito sufficiently honoured by the prospect of this great marriage with the Colonna; and the duchess returned enigmatically that his Holiness must certainly be considered at every turn.

Then I was told on a sudden a few days later that Ippolito was arriving. There was to be a boar hunt in the mountains, and he was to come for that with others from Rome. On the afternoon they were expected

I watched long from the window until the party appeared at last, pigmy in the pale distance of the plain, attending lances glistening as they drew nearer, and a great sun like a globe of tarnished copper hanging in the slate-grey sky over the mountains behind them.

The duchess assembled all her ladies to go with herself and her step-daughter to the long chamber at supper-time. The major-domo announced our entrance, and I still have the memory of the hangings lifted and the disclosure of the hearth shouting with flame and Ippolito coming forward in black velvet with sleeves of quilted taffeta and with that lambency behind him. He had grown, and was more closely knit, looking as if he had now attained his full stature. I was able to examine his countenance before he caught sight of me and I could not explain it to myself: for as my eyes dwelt on his golden skin, on the satin of his dark hair and the proud scarlet of his Medici underlip which was matched in defiance by the angle of his marked brows, I saw that some constraint held him, and that his debonair and graceful salutation of his two hostesses was rather the habit of much experience, and was designedly devoid of display of natural feeling. It was only when he recognised myself that this tension relaxed, and the world was a pleasant place for me for 30 seconds because he held my hands, and, kissing first the one and then the other, proclaimed gaily to all who cared to hear that I was his dearest and most constant friend.

There were two supper tables that evening and I seated with the guests at that of the duchess. The lady Isabella was rather more rouged than her custom was, and I saw that her forehead had been newly fomented and plucked (for she affected the extreme of that fashion). She laughed at and with Ippolito somewhat to the exclusion of others, and it seemed as if they shared a jest between them; but otherwise her usual buoyancy and levity, always a little tiresome, was neither more nor less apparent. The talk was all of the hunt of the morrow, and if the lady Giulia took but little part in it, I thought this might be from a sense of what was fitting, although the siege Pagliano had undergone had long dispelled any conception of a retired widowhood. She went to her wardrobe directly after supper, asking me to remain with the company. Ippolito was with her to the door of the long chamber, and it was as she turned from him after the hangings had been lifted and the page had stooped for her train that I saw his face. I think it was a fear that it may have betrayed him which caused him to make quickly for the lady Isabella, catching her hands, kissing her lips, swinging her lightly round him, and demanding that musicians be called and that they all dance the brando.<sup>3</sup>

I sat perforce on the raised window-seat out of the way to watch the romp that ensued. The duchess Elisabetta would never allow the brando to be danced at Urbino in her presence, and I was now to see how indecorous it could become. Messer Tebaldeo, messer Corrado, the late duke's secretary, and others of the elder generation came up to me to smile and shrug their shoulders, but I had no real authority and was powerless to stop it. The black raiment of the dancers as they whirled under the torches in itself gave a look of depravity: outside the window the high wind was grieving, and Ippolito had monna Clemenza in his arms and was biting her white shoulder: he was flushed and his laughter untrammelled as he flung her to the young lord Rodrigo Colonna and caught monna Gabriele by her petticoat. I despaired how an evening begun like this might end. At the suggestion of sir Matteo that all were thirsty (and I could believe it) wine was brought, and then they all fell to the game of forfeits with the ladies blindfolded, and the lady Isabella ever audible and shrill above the rest. Presently I was startled by a voice in my ear saying quietly that this was not the evening he had hoped for, and there was Ippolito on the bench beside me.

It seemed an eternity to me as we sat silently regarding one another. I think he saw I knew his secret before I found utterance to tell him so. It was difficult to choose my words, for that he should love the lady Giulia had seemed to me, in the very instant the hangings had fallen behind her, a mischance beyond all reckoning; yet I could make no mistake that this was a man's passion of worship braced to bear the enmity of all the world and the condemnation of heaven itself.

He asked when he could have speech with me alone, and after a little thought I told him it would not be possible on the morrow, but that on the morning after I would ask messer Porrino if we might have the use of his closet explaining that we had parted on the day of the revolution in Florence and had much that needed relating. Then, I saying some words about the scene before us, and the lateness of the hour and mine own helplessness, Ippolito was instantly on the floor and had the lady Isabella by the wrist: he was laughing but authoritative, and to my marvel prevailing, not only with herself but with all the flock of dishevelled girls whom I found myself shepherding to their beds.

I went presently to the wardrobe of the duchess, and her voice called to me from the bedchamber beyond. She was sitting by the hearth in a robe of white velvet lined with ermine, her hair loosened and her bare

feet on a cushion. I sometimes thought the lord Vespasiano had ransacked the world for all that had been brought together here. Great craftsmen had been under toll for the decorated ceiling, the tapestries, the silk carpet, the bed of ivory, ebony, and cedarwood, the gold basin and ewer, the Crucifix in its alcove with the jewelled doors, the painted and encrusted cassone, the clock in its crystal case, the gem cabinet inlaid with tortoiseshell and jade. It all made the atmosphere of the dream in which men have things as they will because of their feeble hold on life itself: it seemed far from equilibrium, and as if the figure of dangerous grace sitting in its midst was abiding in muffled loneliness, enthroned in some fantastic meadow by a soundless sea instead of in her own house: I even saw the sea as that of eternity, and she waiting beside it, seeking nothing, until chill airs from afar should come to attemper her beauty.

I have wondered to what degree this mute claim of the lady Giulia to loneliness as a right and an unassailable pride was immanent in her own nature, or to what degree it had its occasion in her translation from the position of the youngest daughter of an impoverished family to that of a great and independent Roman princess. Then, whatever the experiences of her brief married state had been, they had left her without desire for the proffered love of men; there was no summer as yet in her heart which should unfold the sleeping flower of passion in her spirit. I stood there looking down at her perfect feet chiselled against the dark cushion, and knew that it would be a hard task to persuade them to stray from her throne unless they led her to one more dazzling and more secure: for she was very young.

She questioned me about the doings of the evening, and I could but say that I thought it not well that she had left the company so early, for that her presence would have imposed some restraint. She was ill-pleased at this, knowing that I was right, but she answered that she would order it differently on the morrow. I did not stay with her for her women came to say that the bath was ready. She rode out with the hunt in the early morning, but returned at midday with two or three of the others. It was starlight before the lady Isabella and the rest of the party came back in the high spirits engendered by the fine sport they had had and the long hours in the open air. They learned that the gentlemen were to have their supper apart in the armoury, and that the duchess had bidden to her own table in the small dining chamber out of her wardrobe the lady Isabella and myself, with Ippolito, the lord Rodrigo and messer Molza.

It was Francesco Molza alone who made the conversation to stand on four legs at supper-time. Ippolito was tongue-tied, unable to be natural because he desired so much to shine, the lady Isabella and her kinsman Rodrigo were frankly exhausted with the day's exertion and gave themselves up to their young appetites, while the lady Giulia sat faintly smiling, and sustaining her own silence as if it were as becoming as candlelight. When we rose from the table the lady Isabella kissed her stepmother's cheek saying that she must take her weariness to bed, and then, with a laughing look round at each one of us, she put her dimpled hands on Ippolito's shoulders and saluted him on the lips. As he took the hands from his shoulders into his own his expression was inscrutable; he led her to the door and bowed to her there with exaggerated deference.

This onset seemed to have restored to him some measure of assurance, for when we all went into the wardrobe he at once opened the clavichord, and sitting down to it and making its thin music accompaniment to his enchanted voice, he sang softly

*Immortalis fiet  
Ibi manens homo;  
Arbor ibi quaelibet  
Suo gaudet pomo;  
Viae myrrha, cinnamo  
Fragrant et amomo—  
Conjectari poterat  
Dominus ex domo,*

. . . . .

It was the image of the grove of love, and I seemed to be listening to the echo of another voice of long ago. Then Ippolito jumped to his feet saying that this lyric was four hundred years of age and had been set to music for him by Costanza Festa of the choir of S. Pietro, who had composed for him also a duet for clavichord and flute: he asked permission of the duchess to send to his chamber for the composition and for his flute if she were not too tired to try the duet over with him.

She hesitated visibly at this, and the lord Rodrigo and messer Molza hastened to say that she must not consider them for, to assuage jealousies which must be raging, it was clearly their duty to join the supper party in the armoury. They departed laughing, and when the flute and the sheets of music arrived presently by a page, I sent him away again for my broidery and seated myself by the hearth.

Ippolito's music was an inheritance, while the lady Giulia had only industriously learnt to perform and to appreciate, and she did not read



music quickly at sight. The duet, therefore, had many halting places, and I had the repeated spectacle of the musician submerged in the lover, and Ippolito welcoming each pause as an opportunity and then failing to take advantage of it.

I knew by this time that the duchess had a complete awareness of how it lay with him: but how it lay with herself no one perhaps might ever discover, and there was nothing in her enchanting alternations of gentle vivacity and smiling serenity to scatter doubt or furnish proof. But Ippolito was man, who forever believes that when a woman gives her hand in kindness it is invitation and admits everything. He was man all sensitiveness it is true, feeling the enormous weight attached to each word he uttered, and trembling lest it should be the wrong word: nevertheless he was also everyman, convinced that within a pace of him lay immeasurable bliss which would positively be his, and which only depended on a smile, a touch, the exact word if he could find it.

The art of love needs a courage that seldom comes either until love is waning, or until love, unrequited, has ceased to make claims. Courage to listen to the dictates of the heart and to say exactly what the intoxication of the moment suggests is rare indeed. I listened to Ippolito, incredibly stilted, labouring to deliver himself of what was witty or impressive, and I asked myself if he would be more natural if I were not there: then telling myself it was better as it was, for nothing could be worse than to say passionate things prematurely or at the wrong time. Moreover, was not his feeling illicit?

As I sat waiting next morning beside the writing desk in the cold closet of messer Porrino with his scaldino tucked under my skirts, I wondered if Ippolito had forgotten our rendezvous; but he came at last, striding in, with riding boots of soft leather up to his thighs and wearing a fur-lined jerkin. I saw that his dreams had evidently brought him gaiety and consolation, for his dark eyes were all laughter as he stood with his hands on his hips looking down at me, and telling me a tale at first hearing so amazing that I could not credit it.

He declared to me that the will of the lord Vespasiano could never now be carried out, for that the lady Isabella was already the wife of the lord Luigi Gonzaga, the espousal having taken place in the chapel here in the previous month of April. His glee over the affair was unbounded. The lord Luigi he said was the eldest of the lady Giulia's brothers, a man of about thirty years of age, one of the most valiant of the em-

peror's officers, of handsome mien and with a long experience in the arts of love. From the moment he had appeared on the terrace at Pagliano, sword in hand as the deliverer of the garrison, the lady Isabella had taken fire. Could I but see this Luigi, grinned Ippolito, I would never blame her. And who was to blame him either, for the one thing fortune had hitherto denied him was wealth: Sabbioneta needed that he should make some such marriage. Nothing really stood between himself and the lady Isabella but a dead man's desire about a youth she had never seen and the hesitation of a young sister. There was of course need for caution, because, as an officer in the emperor's service, he must not arouse the resentment of the phalanx of the Colonna, and he well understood that at this juncture he must do nothing to exasperate his Holiness: but it was he with his men-at-arms who had made the Pope's escape from S. Angelo to Orvieto possible, and he had been at pains to commend himself in that quarter ever since: then he had been a favourite with the emperor when on service in Spain, and altogether he had been confident that there would not be much difficulty in getting the marriage accepted if a due diplomacy was exercised.

It can be believed how staggered I was at this tale, and how I sought to gather my wits together for full comprehension of it; my first demand being what proof existed of this secret marriage and of its validity. Ippolito replied to this that the lord Luigi had a document in his possession signed by witnesses<sup>4</sup> and which he himself had seen, and moreover the lady Giulia had testified to him that she herself had been present at the ceremony in the early morning of that April day and that Fra Girolamo, her Confessor, had blessed the rings and had said a Mass. Ippolito continued that, when he came to Pagliano last summer to make the acquaintance of the lady Isabella, he already knew of the affair, for the lord Luigi had taken him into his confidence at Viterbo before he set out, confessing culpability. Ippolito declared that he had been unable to do anything but laugh, and had lent himself with glee to the plot, for they had agreed with one another that it would not be propitious just then to confront his Holiness with the truth of the matter; and he had taken to Pagliano a missive from the Gonzaga to his wife which enjoined her to make Ippolito's courtship colourable. She had not been backward in doing so, and had kept the sport going ever since as I might have observed, Ippolito said, grinning at me; although, he added, it was ridiculous to suppose that anyone of discernment should believe that the two lamps of joy she carried about in her round head had been lighted by him.

I sat with my hands folded helplessly, and at length I said, dully but decisively, that the lady Isabella was constantly on horseback and could not be with child. But Ippolito, now straddled across the stool of messer Porrino, shook with laughter as he related that he had not let the lord Luigi off a cross-examination, and that this one had declared the marriage to be complete and himself hopeful of fatherhood. The lady Giulia moreover had taken the earliest opportunity to speak to him of the lady Isabella's pregnancy and of her consequent anxiety to have the marriage acknowledged, and when he returned to Viterbo he had been insistent with the lord Luigi that the Pope must be told and that all must be published. They had gone to his Holiness together. I looked my interrogation at this, and Ippolito shrugged his shoulders. I knew what his Holiness was, he said: it had not suited him to believe their tale, and that was an attitude he had maintained ever since, refusing to have the matter re-opened. The lord Luigi had been consumed with anger, but had felt all further effort would be useless until the coming of the emperor: meanwhile the lady Isabella had been beside herself with mortification and had more than once, in her reckless way, threatened to take her own life.<sup>5</sup> However, in the month of September before mine own coming she had miscarried, and that awkwardness was now happily at an end. And then, with woeful infatuation, Ippolito concluded by saying that when the emperor came all would be well, and that he considered that Providence had clearly intervened for his own great happiness.

At this I could but raise my hands with a gesture meant to convey to him that he had abandoned all reason, and his eyes narrowed and darkened as his gaze encountered mine. I knew speech to be ashes, but it was imperative to say to him that until he was unambiguously reseated in Florence, and had what was concrete to offer in the place of what she must give up if she remarried, he would be but a poltroon if he made his hope of winning the hand of the duchess of Trajetto a jest for the universe. And I asked him how far he trusted his Holiness to reinstate him as Magnifico.

To this he made reply that he did not of course trust Pope Clement at all, but he had certain knowledge that the desire to be revenged on Florence was paramount with the Holy Father; and he demanded of me if there was any alternative to his own restoration, for it was certain that the citizens would never endure Alessandro placed over them. I rejoined that everything had to be endured when enforced by the sword, and that when the Medici went back this time it would be in the wake

of an army. He stood biting his twisted underlip and I saw that he was suddenly apprehensive; but he rallied, flinging his arms wide. He was so young, so confident, so lighted from within by a great hope: I could not credit that it was all nothing but the eternal fraud of the heart: I was defiant with myself that here was the love that is powerful like genius, knowing how to attain its ends.

The Cardinal Colonna had written from Naples with the suggestion that the lady Giulia and the lady Isabella should go to the palazzo in Rome for the festivals of Christmas and the Epiphany, he saying that he had refurnished the despoiled altars of the adjoining church of SS. Apostoli, and that all there was in order once more. The lady Isabella had been insistent to go, and departed with four ladies and an escort, but the lady Giulia would not leave Pagliano; giving me the two reasons that she trusted no one and that this might be some plot to seize the castello in her absence, and that the marchioness of Pescara was to be resident too in the palazzo in Rome for the festivals, so the lady Isabella would be sufficiently supported, while she herself was in no mood for trailing about in spiritual pastures. I, knowing the lady Vittoria Colonna by reputation, could not but smile at this last sally, but I had the certainty that while the joyful setting out of the lady Isabella had been inspired by the lively hope of seeing the lord Luigi, the lady Giulia was as surely chained to the hearth at Pagliano by a discretion which betokened a distrust of life, and of herself face to face with Ippolito.

Enchainment to the hearth was actual, for the weather was very bad with a bitter wind, and all the pinnacles of the mountain-ranges were white and explicit against the sky. Many of the household had gone to their own homes in Rome or elsewhere, and it was certainly pleasanter to be a small company and I well content. I noted on the morning of Christmas Eve that the wind had dropped, and later on the snow began to fall, at first slowly and then with greater insistence, enhancing the sensation of isolation from an unimportant world going on somewhere which I always enjoyed at Pagliano. I was sitting one afternoon in lazy comfort by the logs in the long chamber when the duchess came in hurriedly, and with heightened colour and a certain stumbling of words she told me that they had sent to her that the lord Ippolito de' Medici was below, beleaguered by the storm and asking a night's hospitality. As we stood waiting to receive him I observed, with a tranquillity I did not feel, and forgetting that the duchess had never opened the affair to

me, that probably the request was a subterfuge, and that he might have hastened from Rome to bring the good news that his Holiness had been prevailed upon at last to acknowledge the lady Isabella's marriage to the lord Luigi.

But when Ippolito was presently within the hangings with a little snow on his shoulders, very upright, and pausing for a moment before he strode across the floor to us, I knew it was not the concerns of others which had brought him, for I beheld him as one who had left his soul's perturbed mansion for good to follow his desire down the wind. And I realised too that he stood there not able to see life as a whole, for its end being unknown its present was more or less unintelligible: his hesitation on the threshold told that he was wondering for the first time since he rode out of Rome if his invasion here was not a blunder, and his imagination that it would be otherwise a vain thing. The damps of hell itself wrapped him in a cloud of diffidence as he stood before us, but he had a sufficient hold on himself to say no more than that the snow was balling so badly that the horses could scarce keep on their legs, and the darkness was coming on apace.

I intervened with the authority of my age, for his garments were very wet, and it was not until two hours later that we saw him again; he coming at supper-time to the rooms of the duchess, not in decorous black as on his previous visit, but in murrey-coloured velvet bordered with sable, with a vest pleated and brodered, and with a wide chain set with rubies and pearls. He and I exchanged trivialities as we waited for the lady Giulia, who arrived from her bedchamber at last flushed and unsmiling, saying that her head ached somewhat and that she must ask pardon for her undress. She had discarded her veil and her plaited hair hung over her white shoulders and below her waist. She sat at table eating but little, and making it difficult for Ippolito to do justice to a Lucullus feast that included quails stuffed with truffles. But the wine provided gave him courage to be of good heart, it being a wine called Tokay out of Hungary and a beverage for kings.

We three were within the walls of the wardrobe at last, and I dissolved into the deep shadow beyond the clavichord, and presently slipped behind the hanging into the bedchamber while Ippolito stood, with a hand on the hood of the chimney, illumined by the piled hearth, and striving straightway to set out his tale to the lady Giulia in a faultless pattern; succeeding not too well because he was using the springs of feeling to turn the wheels of his mind. He told how two days gone his Holiness had sent for him alone to his cabinet and had said that the

lady Isabella Colonna being, as he heard, now in Rome, there seemed no reason why her marriage with Ippolito should not take place in the new year, and without undue festivity owing to the recent death of her father and all the conditions in the city. Ippolito declared that he judged this could only be countered by passionate declamation, for the Pope, when he would yield to nothing else, could sometimes be moved by a display of temper; Ippolito had accordingly used stringent words, setting forth once more all the proofs of the lady Isabella's marriage with the lord Luigi, and maintaining that, whether or no, he would never have taken the lady for wife; that he had as little liking for her as she for him. It had disconcerted him entirely that his Holiness pretended to be only diverted at all this, and then, changing his tone, had said incisively that after all it was no great matter for there were other heiresses in Italy, and that he should arrange forthwith for the betrothal of Ippolito to the lady Giulia the only daughter of the lady Caterina Cibo, duchess of Camerino.<sup>6</sup> The rage in which Ippolito had flung himself out of the papal cabinet was, he said, in the upshot genuine.

During all this recital the lady Giulia was seated on the other side of the hearth in her great chair with its high back of Spanish leather. Her slim hands were clasped on her knee and her face with its long oval presently declined over them between the ropes of her hair, as Ippolito, pale and hoarse, valiantly bent his spirit to its height, and through a labyrinth of words made clear his desperate meaning and that for him there could be but one marriage, and for his soul but one hope. All the language of courtship necessarily carries the tarnish of immemorial usage, but what he contrived to say made the four walls into a pavilion in another world, and the gaily coloured arabesques behind the figure of the duchess looked like space broken into flower.

Then Ippolito spoke her name.

In a curious way one's name is oneself, for the individuality is built up around it, so that to hear it uttered aloud always has a sound of authority, and gives at all times a heightened sense of being alive. Spoken as the invocation of a lover who comes to his courtship as to a shrine, it is the trumpet sounding before the gate of life itself.

*Give your hands into my keeping:*

*Love me:*

*Be wise.*

There was but a depleted company at the Christmas Mass at midnight

in the chapel. The lady Giulia was already kneeling in her place when I went in, and I could see nothing of her countenance under her veil. I looked for Ippolito in vain: he did not come. The smell of the burning wax of the candles on the altar and the nasal shrilling of the boys' voices behind it were unendurable.

I was up betimes next morning, and soon learnt that Ippolito was still in Pagliano, for his attendants had not yet slept off a drunken carouse and he could not start for Rome. I saw him from a window at last, cloaked, and leaning on the parapet of the terrace, and to cloak myself and join him did not need consideration. He did his best to greet me courteously. It was evident that he had not slept, and I was face to face with the desperation quickened by his vigil. The morning was misty and very raw and cold, so that I felt it to be derisory to say that if he had not yet been to the top of the keep he might care to go there and see the full spectacle of the snow-covered mountains. He climbed behind me up the winding steps only because he could think of no reason to refuse, but on the flat roof of the tower his tension relaxed a little as I had hoped it would. I always wondered if there was any other spot on earth that could give one the same realisation of the insignificance of man and his poor hopes: this morning all the immensity of the bleak landscape seemed to hang suspended amid the desolation of the winter skies. Ippolito leaned between the battlements, moving from one side of the platform to the other, while I, who always had a giddiness at this great height, sat on a rough bench. I was thoroughly chilled through before he sat down beside me and asked with an intensity of bitterness if the earth contained another such fool who would come with nothing in his hand asking for all.

So monstrous a thing did it seem to me that the lady Giulia should have used the insecurity of Ippolito's fortunes as a weapon that I showed my indignation in some turgid words: whereat he kissed me, full of glee at my surprise and discomposure, like the boy whose existence he had not forgotten. But immediately he was a man again, and was showing me how deplorable a thing love may be when it has learnt to laugh at itself. The duchess of Trajetto, he assured me, had no fear of losing the kingdom that belonged to her in this world, it was her place among the spheres which she hesitated to forfeit. Loneliness she had told him was her master and her guide for it led her to the stars: and Ippolito cursed himself that, on his knees before her, he had been betrayed into the folly of supplication. He had declaimed that he saw her among the stars, and perceived that at her nearness, which was a

fragrance and a rapture, they held their breath with love: but there was another universe which waited and longed for her, and that was the fathomless universe of a human heart:—Ippolito looked round at me and asked if I would have credited him with so much poesy. I could only smile dumbly at his gibe, and then heard that he had at length tried to reach his lady's soul with his touch, asking her if he, who was alone in the world and had not even loneliness for a friend, might not take her hand and warm it in his own when she wandered among the silences where he would never speak to her words that could be heard. It had been a brave borrowing of symbols, Ippolito concluded with a gust of graceless laughter. I was so afraid of stemming the flow of his confidence that I dared not ask what the lady Giulia had finally said to bring him from his knees and make him his own man again. I was to know presently she had said nothing, but that suppliant there, holding her reluctant fingers, rapt above earth, and realising that the supreme beauty of life was to succeed in love such as this, he had on a sudden been made aware, wordlessly, but unequivocally, that to the princess of the Gonzaga and the Colonna he was after all nothing but a bastard of the Medici, an outcast from Florence, and dependent even for his shoes and his hose on the uncertain decisions of a double-dealing Pope.

All the chills of Gehenna crept around my heart as I sat there beside Ippolito powerless to advise or help, for no advice can be really useful unless it is easy to follow. I felt that, if I said to him that despair is always the greatest of human errors, it would fall on unhearing ears: and I wonder, now that it is all as a tale long told, if it can be some instinctively felt ultimate purpose that urges man to eternal rebellion against the conflicting circumstances of life, and if every fight waged blindly against fate, even if it ends in defeat, is one more position gained in some eternal battle. But at the time I could only seek hopelessly for words that would bring some healing to a pride which I saw had been scorched beyond endurance. I reflected in my bitterness that the lady Giulia might cherish the pride of living and dying alone upon her throne, but that actual loneliness would be a terror for her, because she had never for a moment contemplated denying a right to be defended: moreover, did she not of a certainty desire worship as well as defence?

Before we eventually left our eyrie in the clouds, I had from Ippolito some account of how affairs really stood between himself and his Holiness. He told me that peace with the emperor was still suspended in the air, and it was rumoured that, far away in Spain, the lord Baldassare Castiglione, with whom the negotiations had lain, was quite



distraught with it all. However Cardinal Quiñones, the imperial envoy, had now landed at Genoa and should arrive in Rome before the end of the year. Meanwhile, Ippolito said, he had made sure from those in the inner circles of the palazzo S. Pietro that there would be no treaty, either with the emperor or the League, which did not include an undertaking to restore the Medici to Florence. He said he knew I had warned him that this might mean Alessandro and not himself, but he should never believe that possible until he saw the negro actually installed in the palazzo in the via Larga. What troubled him was not this, but all the other irksome plans for his welfare with which his Holiness must needs concern himself. It was true, Ippolito said, that Pope Clement was penniless, but the papal revenues would improve again, and the Medici wealth would be recovered, and there seemed to him no reason for all the anxiety and haste to provide him either with a rich wife or with a Cardinal's hat.

At this notion of the red hat I exclaimed: and then it seemed a stupidity that I had never contemplated the possibility of the Pope seeking to remove Ippolito from Alessandro's path in so unimpeachable a manner. But Ippolito was not inclined to view the matter in that light, for he was saying easily that although he had rejected the propositions both of the heiress of Camerino and of the title of Eminence, yet he had discussed aspects of the Cardinalate with the Cardinal Farnese who had always what was worldly-wise to say, and who had reminded him that it need not mean the priesthood, and need not cut him off from life, and certainly not from hopes of Florence. Still, concluded Ippolito, it was repugnant to him: it would be a great jest to have a palazzo in Rome and the income of a hundred benefices to squander, but to find himself in red petticoats with a tonsured head would be Abaddon. If the worst came, fortune could always be won by the sword.

Apart from the reason that I was in no mood for intercourse with the lady Giulia, I felt that my long exposure on the top of the keep needed some subsequent prudence, and when I knew that Ippolito had ridden away, I put myself between the sheets in my bed and sent for a hot posset. I remained in my chamber for several days, the duchess coming to visit me more than once. As she sat beside me one day, watching me quietly, I felt that she was seeing me, not as myself, but as a segment of her own personality performing at a little distance, and that few people would ever succeed in making themselves recognised by her as separate

entities: she might observe certain individuals standing upright and looking independent, but it would not occur to her that they were more than her own outposts. I suspect that I was in no mood to be fair to her. Even when I was again with her in daily life, and sat at my needle while she took a book in her hand or listened to her reader, I was saying to myself that she had no real love for learning, and only employed her intellect so far as it would help her to a show of knowledge and of memory. But when I think now of her youth at this time, and of her isolation in the midst of her great possessions, and when I realise about how few things do we ever judge rightly, I wonder if I was not perhaps too astringent. Perhaps, the while that she was only offered the love of men, her real need was for the comfort of God.

After the Feast of the Epiphany our quietude came to an end, for the lady Isabella and her following came back in high spirits from Rome, and they brought the news with them that his Holiness was very ill and his life despaired of. A letter from Ippolito was put into my hand.

*From the palazzo S. Pietro this 13th day of January 1529*

Honoured Lady and Constant Friend

I parted with you at Pagliano with the brave words that I would take a sword in my hand and carve mine own fortune rather than become a Prince of the Church. You will therefore despise me heartily when you learn that I am from henceforward to be known to all men as his Eminence the Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici. I am beside myself with the mortification of having been cozened into it. I would have you know the whole story.

His Holiness of course has his informants everywhere, and when he bade me to supper with him on the eve of the new year and I found I was to be alone with him, and he spoke at once of his concern for my welfare and his desire to bestow the red hat on me, I knew at once that someone had carried to him the story of my ride to Pagliano and that he had guessed the rest. He told me of his affection for me, and I have never doubted it. Last summer when I came to him at Viterbo, finding him altered beyond recognition, I could not but be aware that to have me in his neighbourhood refreshed his spirits, and it is always my brag that I can make him laugh.

He told me a miserable story of the maze of difficulties in which he stood, and his fear that the end of all would be that the emperor, instead of insuring Florence to him, would join hands with that apostate city. He did not mention, what all here know, that he saw the lord Bishop Gasparro Contarini every day and was deeply involved with the League too: but, if I needed conviction, I was certainly convinced that for me the future was an impenetrable fog.

Nevertheless, I remained obdurate, and I demanded of him why he did not rather bestow on Alessandro all the glories with which he tempted me. I could not dispute his answer that the consent of the Curia was always necessary for these transactions, and that, although my years and my extravagance of spirit might be raised as objections, it would be impossible to ask the Cardinals to consent to the hat going to Alessandro who was younger still: and whom, he might have added, failed to commend himself even to the pigeons. He wept a little when he bade me goodnight, and gave me his Blessing, saying as I rose from my knees that I certainly had a devil.

There the matter rested; and then on the Feast of the Epiphany his Holiness caught a chill. I was talking to one and another without the Sixtine Chapel as he was carried by, and as we acclaimed him I heard more than one comment on his feeble appearance. They told me in the evening that he was not well and had some fever. I sought admittance to his chamber next morning hoping to persuade him to prudence, for I heard that there was to be a Consistory and that he purposed to preside at it. I was not able to prevail of course, although he seemed pleased in his frigid way at my solicitude. After the Consistory he was obliged to go again to his bed, all next day he was in a high fever, and the following morning he was so ill that when I went to make my enquiries in person, the doctor Mariano della Palma, who had seemed to be the most hopeful among the physicians, would only say that it rested in the hands of Almighty God. I was not allowed to see him.

I was told after noon that he had sent for all the Cardinals, and what impressed the certainty of his approaching end on me was that of a sudden no one seemed to pay much heed to me, and I saw a difference even in the demeanour of the lacqueys. I spent the afternoon at the window of my small library watching the coaches of the Cardinals trundling into the cortile, and wondering what I should do after the death was announced, for I knew that I should have to leave S. Pietro. Then darkness fell, and they brought me supper and lights, and I sat on at the table with a second flagon of wine, trying to put a little heart into myself, but only realising that no one in all the world was so friendless as I. I had the experience in Florence that prosperity makes few friends, and now I saw I was to have the further experience that adversity makes none. I had resolved to go to Naples and offer my sword to the prince of Orange, when they came hurrying to announce the Cardinal Farnese, and with him the Cardinals Salviati and Ridolfi.

I must not make an overlong tale of it. I think my spirit was drained by many hours of fatiguing consideration, and my senses too, perhaps, a little dulled by the moscata, but as their Eminences sat there looking at me, and the voice of the Farnese sounded in my ears, I asked myself why the young must be for ever exhorted to plan out life as if it was certain that they would live to grow old. There was nothing said to me about the future that I had not already heard, and all that was vain repetition: what I was newly face to face with was that they said the Pope could not live through the night, that he had

obtained the consent of the Cardinals, and that he would die miserably if I still refused to receive the red hat.

I remember, when I was a boy here in the time of Pope Leo, that Monsignor Sadoletto, the only person who has ever concerned himself for my soul, once said to me that when one comes to a place in life where a choice has to be made, one is often puzzled as to which is the wiser of two courses; but he added that there can never be any hesitation as to which is the right course. I felt that evening how mistaken he was, for if I live to be a thousand I shall still be uncertain if what I did was right or wrong.

I seemed to be walking in a delirium as I followed the three Cardinals through the vast chambers thronged with curious faces. At the best of times it seems that one has travelled a thousand miles before one reaches the papal apartments, and that night I thought we should never get there: then there was that room at the end of everything with its towering bed canopy. Scarlet forms seemed to pad all its corners, there was an altar and lights, and in the middle of everything the piled pillows, and cavernous eyes looking at me over a white beard. I believe I was sobbing as I knelt beside the bed, and when I rose I had the detested hat in my hand.

I am now Cardinal de' Medici, but I will never submit to the tonsure. His Holiness did not die that night, and they told me it was I who had given him new vitality. But he cannot live, and each day may be the last. Preparations for a Conclave are already being made, and the Curia has met in the palazzo Monte. I was not invited, for the Bull confirming my election has not yet been published,<sup>7</sup> but if you can picture it to yourself I shall be in the Conclave itself. It is already decided that this must not take place in Rome, for the emperor still holds Ostia and Civita Vecchia and has his great army at Naples, so he could enforce the election of any nominee of his own, and that at all cost must be prevented: thus say I as a Cardinal and as good as any. Bologna, Verona, and Avignon are spoken of as alternatives, and I am told that the latter place is the suggestion of the English Cardinal Wolsey who hopes this time to secure his own election.

My thoughts are a good deal with Caterina and what her fate will be when the Pope is dead. When I said that no one in the world was as lonely as myself I forgot my cousin immured behind those high walls in the via Ghibellina. I sign myself derisively

*Ippolito de' Medici: Card.*

I found of course that the duchess already had knowledge of all this from the lady Isabella, whose jesting at supper-time about Ippolito as a Cardinal was openly malicious. Madonna Dionora wondered what

would become of the other bastard Alessandro, and some bawdy stories went round concerning him. The lady Giulia was very pale, and sat scarcely listening to any of it, and I wondered if the new values that were now crystallising about Ippolito were stirring her imagination. But she had other employment for her mind as well I knew, for when the Pope died the protection that had been afforded her here in Pagliano would cease.

It was almost fantastic that Pope Clement did not die. Horsemen went each day to Rome, returning alternately, so that we had news of his state continuously for a time. After more than one alarm he began to get better, although he could not get rid of fever, and so it went on until the end of February when he had another severe attack, and that he could not survive was again pronounced to be a certainty. At the beginning of March, however, he left his bed, and in the event it was not the Pope's life's flame that went out, but that of his envoy the lord Baldassare Castiglione far away in Spain. The news came at Eastertime that this great gentleman had died on the sixth day of February, worn out, as I learnt later, by the urgencies of his mission and heartbroken at the perfidies of his master. Mgr Girolamo da Schio, the master of the papal household, was at once sent to replace him, and the days went on quietly in the summer heats at Pagliano where we felt as much apart from the march of events as if we had been a hundred miles from Rome.

I had not heard again from Ippolito, and could learn little about him except stray information to the effect that the Pope had made him Vice-Chancellor, had given him the great Riario palazzo which he had himself occupied as a Cardinal, and that Ippolito still steadfastly refused the tonsure and went about daily in the streets of Rome in lay dress with a sword. But at the end of July another letter came to me from him, and if I do not give it here it is because it is disordered and of great length, and shows his feeling about Florence in its most inordinate aspect: I was never able after receiving it to banish the fear that he would compass the death of Alessandro in one way or another. The pith of the letter was that, on the twenty-second day of July, don Louis de Praet had arrived in Rome with a letter for the Pope from the emperor, this bringing the news that a treaty had been signed at Barcelona on the 29th day of June to which the emperor had bound himself by oath before the high altar of the Cathedral. However much liking one may have for great affairs there is nothing so tedious as to retail a treaty between princes, and Ippolito was only concerned to fling on to his paper that, although it had been agreed at Barcelona that the return of the Medici to Florence

was to be enforced, yet there was no doubt remaining who was to be installed there, for he learnt that, previous to the signing of the treaty, a compact of marriage had been made between Alessandro and a bastard daughter of the emperor named Margherita.<sup>8</sup>

I re-read today all Ippolito said to me in his young wrath, and I ask myself if such passions showed an efficacy or only an insufficiency of depth. Youth is the age of flowering, and flowers give out extravagantly their colour and their perfume. It is of the nature of youth to give and to spend, and to struggle to win the satisfaction of having its gifts accepted. It would have been hypocrisy in Ippolito to pretend that his assured gifts were those fitted to adorn Holy Church. Honesty was at all events in the expression of his baffled ambition, and the instinct, too, that, poor or rich, no one can be virtuous or happy if fortune has put him in the wrong place. But I could say nothing like this in my reply to him. It was difficult to find anything to say. I felt it to be nothing but a counsel of despair when I wrote that what now remained to him was to commend himself in person to the emperor.

The emperor was coming from Spain to Italy for the first time, and all the land was stirred by the prospect. His first intention had been to land at Naples, and to receive Caesar's crown in Rome; but I suppose the state of Rome, still in ruins, and all the lack of provisions there had been reported to him by his envoys. Moreover it was said that owing to the advance of the Turks on the domains of his brother, king Ferdinand,<sup>9</sup> he thought it prudent not to be too far distant from Germany. He landed at Genoa in August and sent a request from there to his Holiness that he might be crowned in Bologna. This was something unknown and without precedent, and everyone in Rome without exception was against it, while Pope Clement dreaded the journey not only because of his health but on account of its great expense. However, he was still dependent on the emperor for the recovery of Florence and the Papal States, and by September he had let abroad his intention to go to Bologna leaving the Cardinals free to go or stay as they chose. All men's thoughts were now turned northwards; and all women's thoughts too.

After Easter the lord Luigi Gonzaga had come openly to Pagliano more than once, and the lady Isabella's passion for him made itself understood. He was audacious and accomplished, and the evident tyranny of his senses over him was vindicated by the afflatus of his good

spirits: he dissipated the vapours of our drooping community at Pagliano like a refreshing breeze. There seemed to be no reason now why his marriage should not be openly acknowledged, but there were dangerous rivals among those with whom the emperor must walk carefully, and to embarrass him just now would serve no man, declared the lord Luigi. The Colonna had always been imperialists, and their territories were immense, and now that Ippolito's Cardinalate had made it evident that the lord Vespasiano's wish would not be carried out, they were insistent that the lady Isabella's inheritance must be kept in the family, and they had put forward more than one possible Colonna bridegroom. Moreover, in the oldest branch of the Gonzaga family itself, a formidable competitor had arisen in the person of the lord Ferrante Gonzaga, the third son of the lady Isabella d'Este, marchioness of Mantua. It has always been my fortune that I was to hear much of this prevailing lady, but never to see her. In the old days at Urbino she had always been cited with laughter as obtaining everything on which her desire was set, and the lady Giulia, laughing a little too, could not deny the lord Luigi when he declared that the marchioness, having succeeded in wresting from the Pope a Cardinal's hat for her son Ercole, would certainly succeed in getting her son, the marquis Federigo, made a duke by the emperor, and would use both Pope and emperor on behalf of her son Ferrante and secure the lady Isabella Colonna for him by having any other marriage of hers declared invalid. The friendship of Mantua was extremely important to imperial stability in the north.

The lady Giulia heard from her home in Mantua that the marchioness, her cousin, had determined to attend the coronation whether held in Rome or elsewhere, and that she was already having sumptuous dresses made and jewels reset, and was making a judicious selection of lovely ladies to attend her. All Mantuan femininity was reported to be in a flutter. It fluttered us at Pagliano too even to hear about it, for all who could do so in Italy would certainly flock to take part in the festivities, and it was difficult to acquiesce in being left out. I wondered sometimes if the duchess, gleefully supported by the lady Isabella, would gather herself and her courage together, ignore her recent widowhood, and take a plunge into the world: but if she had made the attempt it is certain that her brother would have disapproved. He was twelve years older than herself, much the elder brother of a youngest sister still, certainly an imperative, if laughing, husband, and with the conviction that the place for women was at home. Through him, and in other ways, however, we kept ourselves informed of what was going forward,

and in July and August all the universe seemed to be on the move northwards.

His Holiness had decreed that both Ippolito and Alessandro, with the Cardinals Farnese, Giberti, and Ercole Gonzaga, were to go to Genoa to meet the emperor when he landed: and this the lord Luigi said had been the occasion of rage and rebellion on the part of Ippolito. He had not so far given up his lay attire, and he was now required to do so, for the Pope and all his friends were at one in advising him that he could not approach the emperor, who was a devout Catholic, except in the scarlet of his ecclesiastical rank, and that unless he conformed he would be unable to take part in the coronation ceremonies. The lord Luigi diverted the supper table at Pagliano with repetition of some of Ippolito's damnatory language, and there was of course no pity expressed, nor any realisation of what it can have meant to him to look on while all the tailors in Rome were working to prink out Alessandro as the son-in-law of the emperor. The lord Luigi was to be in charge of the escort which was to go with the party, and they had not left Rome many days when the lord Philibert, prince of Orange and viceroy of Naples, came with bowmen and cavalry up the Appian way, to make preparation for the army which was to undertake the siege of Florence. We heard that he was of 30 years of age, fair and handsome, with very blue eyes, that he was lodged in the Salviati palazzo in the Borgo, and that he had been received at S. Pietro with great honours.

It was sir Matteo and messer Porrino who now became our sources of information, and we were told that the papal garrison was to be withdrawn from Pagliano, for the Pope was required to supply the prince of Orange with all available soldiers: Rome was full of drummers, and recruits gathering round the banners. There was little danger that Pagliano would be attacked while the emperor was in the ascendant and moreover in Italy, but we were sorry to lose sir Matteo who had managed everything with good humour and capacity. Msr Porrino learnt that the lord Philibert had great difficulty in coming to terms with his Holiness about the cost of the war, and that one of his demands was, moreover, that Caterina should be given him in marriage when Florence was captured. It was plain that he would then claim the city and the state in right of his wife, and this was an outcome no one had foreseen. His first task was to capture Perugia, which had revolted from the Holy See, and in the beginning of September the troops all left



Rome, and we soon heard that the lord Malatesta Baglioni had capitulated. The advance on Florence was slow, as artillery had to be awaited from Siena,<sup>10</sup> but at the end of October the army was encamped on the hills to the south-east of the city and fire was opened on San Miniato and the long siege began.

The Pope himself left Rome with the Cardinals Accolti, Cesi, Cesarini and Ridolfi on a wet day at the beginning of October, and in the succeeding weeks most of the other Cardinals and all the foreign envoys followed him. In order to avoid Tuscany his Holiness was obliged to take the longer road through Romagna, but by the end of the month he was carried into Bologna on the *sedia gestatoria*, and preparations for the coming of the emperor, and for the coronation to follow, were set afoot. The emperor entered the city on the 5th day of November, but the coronation did not take place until the 24th day of February in the year of our Lord 1530.

The quiet winter months at Pagliano had their undercurrent of restlessness. There were no guests, and but the scantiest intelligence reached us by an infrequent letter to one or another of the company. Even rumour disdained to come our way. I thought the lady Isabella the happiest among us, for the passion which had stirred her to exaggerations of different kinds had also laid bare a part of her young nature she had not suspected as existing. The heart has its reasons which reason does not know, and I felt that she was beginning unconsciously to realise this castle on its pinnacle as a place where she would one day know the affection of husband and children, and where the good life in the pleasant household would be reproduced. She would never have any philosophy about the character of that life, but interest in its characteristics seemed to be waking, and I was sure that she would always be afraid of it without religion. Over her letters to the lord Luigi she expended much labour, striving to improve her handwriting and her spelling, both of which were very poor, and I could not but feel sorry for the undisciplined and ardent girl when weeks often went by without the return of the courier, or he would come bearing but a brief missive from her lord.

After his task of escorting the Cardinals to Genoa, the lord Luigi had been recalled by the prince of Orange to service before the walls of Florence, and I felt greatly provoked that he said little or nothing about the progress of the siege. My thoughts were often with Caterina,

wondering what her fate behind the beleaguered walls was, and what it was to be. Then in the new year came a letter which agitated the lady Isabella greatly, and the lady Giulia too, the lord Luigi telling that his cousin the lord Ferrante Gonzaga, who was also with the army, had obtained leave to go to Bologna: this being at the instance of the marchioness, his mother, who was pressing with the emperor his claim to the hand of the lady Isabella. The lord Luigi said that he himself could not be spared from his command to follow the lord Ferrante, but he had sent his brother Cagnigno with all the documents, adjuring him to make the story known to all.

On the arrival of this letter the lady Isabella had a hearty fit of weeping, and the anxiety of herself and of the lady Giulia in the empty days and weeks that followed was very great; but at length there were horses in sight on the road from Rome, and this time the lord Luigi actually wrote from Bologna. He said that he had now prevailed with the prince of Orange to let him go there, and, owing to the good services of the Cardinal de' Medici, he had been able to put his case before the Pope and the emperor in person. Both had been friendly, but would only promise that when the coronation was over they would send a commission to take the evidence of the lady Isabella herself. The letter went on to say that the lord Luigi felt under a great obligation to Ippolito de' Medici for his part in it all, and that it was surprising to note what a prestige their young friend the Cardinal had acquired in a throng of notabilities where he might have been easily blotted out. When the lord Luigi had left him in Genoa, it had almost seemed, he said, as if Ippolito's position left no choice between subservience and sour revolt, but he found him in Bologna conducting himself by the rules of conduct which are always the safest guide in doubtful situations, and not merely trusting to the feelings and instinct with which we compose our lives in fortunate and happy hours. The monitory husband of an immature wife wound up by saying that it was always well to have knowledge of these rules; but I thought him more adroit when he enclosed the lady Isabella a poem of his own composing<sup>11</sup> in which he compared her in turn to a storm-tossed barque which will one day reach a haven, to Ippodamia who became the bride of Achilles, and to the constant and industrious Penelope. This last piece of imagery delighted the lady Isabella so much that she besought me to instruct her in the use of the needle: the outcome being that she was playing one day with a needle-holder of cherry wood exquisitely carved which had been given me by the lord Giuliano and that she broke it in two.

The glimpse which the lord Luigi had given of Ippolito made me hunger for some further tidings of him, and one day when we were riding together the lady Isabella told me that the duchess had received a long letter from her cousin the lady Camilla Gonzaga of Novellaria who was in the train of the marchioness of Mantua at Bologna. With her usual indiscreet volubility she went on to say that this Camilla had been in Rome with the marchioness before the sack, that no husband had been found for her then as for the lady Giulia, but that if there were no better fortune in Bologna it would not be for lack of suitors: at least if the lady Camilla herself was to be credited. The lady Giulia herself spoke to me of the letter later on, and I contrived to say that if it did not deal with matters that were too private, it would be a gratification for us all to hear what was happening in Bologna. Accordingly Gandolfo Porrino read us most of the missive one evening, and although it proved to be written only as an outlet for high spirits and vanity, it did, as by some unconscious magic, not only convey the resonance of trumpets, church bells, cannon and shouting crowds, but some of the colour of the occasion too; so that one actually seemed to see the rose-coloured palazzi, and the emperor in golden armour on his white horse making towards the jewelled image that was the Pope, seated on the platform before the church of San Petronio with the scarlet ranks of Cardinals behind him. I thought of Ippolito eating his heart out in that phalanx, and watching Alessandro riding close to the imperial baldacchino, prominent in all this pageantry as the prospective son-in-law of the emperor.

But it was nevertheless evident that Ippolito was holding his own among the great of the earth in Bologna. The lady Camilla wrote that when the emperor came into sight behind the standard of the empire, every woman beholding him was ready, like Queen Dido, to compare herself to the arrowstricken deer of the Cretan woodland. But since he had passed through the streets on his first coming with his wonderful seat in the saddle, and his pallor, and his calm demeanour, few had seen him. He and his Holiness both had their lodging in the palazzo Publico, and it was said that they spent many hours daily in conference, but the emperor rarely went forth except to hear Mass. All expectations that he would hold a brilliant court which would be the centre of festivities were dead, and Bologna would be sadly wanting for diversions if it were not for the hospitality of the marchioness Isabella herself, of the lady Veronica Gambarà and of some of the Cardinals: the Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, said the lady Camilla, was foremost in entertaining all who were of beauty or of note. He had hired a palazzo in the via

d'Azeglio, and, but recently, they had all spent a joyous evening there: she herself had worn a robe of peach-coloured satin with sleeves of silver tissue in the Spanish fashion, and the evening had evidently been one of triumph for her, she saying that she had danced with the Cardinal himself, and that Monsignor Bembo and messer Molza, the two famous poets, had read to the company at supper sonnets which they had previously promised to write in her honour.<sup>12</sup>

The news that Pietro Bembo was at Bologna ought not to have surprised me because to be at the focus of great events in the company of distinguished personages would have the same attraction for him as for others. It was easy to send a letter to him the next time that the lady Isabella was dispatching one to the lord Luigi. I give here his answer to it.

Honoured lady and most dear friend: As the lord Luigi tells me that the courier returns to Pagliano on the morrow, I must put pen to paper at once to thank you for your welcome letter. I am come to Bologna I hardly know why, but certainly with none of the hopes of imperial favour which others cherish. The emperor Charles is neither a scholar nor a theologian, has little Latin, and very little knowledge of our Italian tongue either. The name and fame (such as it is) of Pietro Bembo are quite unknown to him. But all the world is here, and it is well to keep old friendships in repair.

I obtained an audience with his Holiness at once, and was shocked to find myself in the presence of an old man. But Alessandro Farnese, Jacopo Salviati and others tell me that his intellect is as tempered as ever, and that he and the emperor are a match in wits. They confer almost daily, for the treaty did not cover the whole ground and there are the outstanding matters of Milan and Ferrara, and many others, to be considered. I understand that the emperor, although he seems lethargic, has a disconcerting intelligence, and is helped rather than otherwise by the slight impediment in his speech. His natural language is French, and the Medici have always learnt to speak that with some facility, so his Holiness is not at a disadvantage on that score. It is impressive to me to think of the two come together, both being in my opinion heirs to the impossible.

It is this command of the French tongue which has admitted the Cardinal Ippolito to some measure of intimacy with his imperial majesty. Ippolito is on the commission of Cardinals which is arranging all the detail of the coronation and they make use of him when it is necessary to consult the emperor in person. The ceremony is to take place in the large church of San Petronio, and the date is fixed for the 24th day of February, which will be the 30th birthday of the emperor and the anniversary of the victory at Pavia.<sup>13</sup> I am told that the interior of the church is to be fitted up to resemble that of San Pietro in Rome. I have had no real converse with Ippolito yet, although I have been

more than once to his festivities and have met him elsewhere in the world. I have had the tale of his Cardinalate from others, and I see him burning with the fire of resentment; but it is the fire of a gem, and he is superficially as cool and burnished as the immense sapphire on his finger. I have hoped in vain to see him smile when great ladies and beautiful ladies sink billowing among their petticoats to kiss it.

Alessandro de' Medici has a fine apartment here, and attends the emperor on every public occasion. The Pope has not spared expense to set him forth, and his new importance has given him an almost confident bearing. The emperor treats him with punctilio but I judge has no personal interest in him. He has made him duke of Civit -Penna.<sup>14</sup> It may be possible that the marriage will never take place, for the lady Margherita is but a child.<sup>15</sup>

A week or two later I was made glad by getting yet another letter from Mgr Bembo together with one from Ippolito himself. Pietro Bembo wrote—

You told me how forlorn you yourself and all the circle at Pagliano were feeling while the world disports itself far away, and, suspecting that your old friend takes up his pen again with the good intention of cheering you, you will say to yourself (see how I know you) that you hope to be dead before anyone begins to be kind to you. But believe me that the real reason you get this letter is that I myself am feeling the need of some escape for my spirit.

I suppose age always means the pedestrian mood, and that when one goes slowly one has too much time to look about, and the onlooker ever inclined to captiousness. This must be my excuse for confessing that I wish this occasion of the coronation could have been made great by some visible sign of justification for its splendours.

The fall of Rome shook Europe from sea to sea, and Pope and emperor come together to build a new society on its ruins did encourage the notion that the foundations would be laid on new values. But there is no value apart from appreciation of it, and no good apart from preference for it, and the world as I see it in Bologna is no more than the smaller reproduction of the old world of the Rome of Pope Leo from which I fled so many years ago. It is the quality of life that alone matters, but man always seems to have a prejudice against himself, so that there is always a duality, and an opposition between his will and his vision: he keeps his morality and his sense of the deep seriousness of existence apart from his wit and his love of beauty and splendour. You will say to me that this result comes with any society ruled by men, and point me to Urbino where it was otherwise. Perhaps the time is not yet ripe to pass any judgment on Urbino.

But I am using all these words as a cloak for ineptitude and for lack of any judgment of worth. I shall entertain you better if I say that it is to be regretted that it was necessary to leave the empress as regent in Spain, and that we cannot have here the influence of a virtuous court. Through Ippolito I

have made acquaintance with two brothers who are about the emperor, and don Alfonso de Valdès, the elder, declares that the empress Isabella of Portugal is a gracious and noble lady, and that since the marriage, which is one of great felicity, the emperor, always sober in his passions, has remained faithful to her. Bologna laughs a little, of course, because he sometimes frequents the palazzo Massilia and has an obvious pleasure in the society of my old friend the countess of Corregio.<sup>16</sup> I think I have told you before now that the lady Veronica Gambara works magic with the charm of her voice and with her conversation, but if she is the wisest and wittiest woman in Europe she is certainly also the ugliest, and the emperor a stripling in years beside her: the gossips will not contrive to make a scandal out of that, try as they may, and they will find no other fodder. The marchioness of Mantua has youth and beauty in her train, but his Caesarean majesty resists all the allurements of the palazzo Manzoli although he has made it his business to show himself there at a reception. The palazzo of the lady Isabella and her retinue of ladies has become a theme for waggish tongues, and I regret it, for the marchioness has ever been a good friend to me, and, until this realisation of her lax control, I had contemplated the Mantuan court as a future school of manners for my daughter Helena. I should think it unlikely that any such gossip reaches the emperor, and in any event I hear it is a settled thing that he will go to Mantua after the coronation and confer the solicited dukedom. Many of the Cardinals are still too poor, and some, as I discover, still too shaken by the events of the sack to make a great display here, but the Cardinal Farnese has a palazzo where I find a welcome. It is Ippolito, however, who entertains all Bologna, and not to have received any invitation from the Cardinal de' Medici is to be socially an outcast. Only two nights ago I ascended his stairway between his torchbearers, and in the wake of Tullia who was with her mother: they were fortunate in escaping to Siena before the sack. Many well-known ladies of the same complexion, from Venice, Ferrara, and other places, are here of course: it is all very agreeable, and it is but the churlishness of my years that gives me the inclination to moralise. The Pope has endowed Ippolito liberally with the revenue of all vacant benefices, and further with the Archbishopric of Avignon and the see of Casale, and he is Legate in Perugia too. He has always instinctively comprehended splendour, and besides being endowed with intellect and personality he has a name connected in men's minds with success. As I see him here, I picture him as a hawk hovering over its prey which is life: and there seems nothing to prevent him ultimately making the Papacy his own if he will but accommodate his mind to the career of a Churchman, and rid himself of the obsession that he must regain his position in Florence or perish of self-contempt. He is still without the tonsure.

Ippolito himself wrote thus—

Honoured lady and most constant friend

The lord Luigi tells me that a courier goes to Pagliano tomorrow, and the

next time he returns here I would know by your hand how it fares with you all on your segregated eminence in this winter weather. I myself live laborious days and carry out all the duties of my exalted station after the best models.

I always have your advice about the emperor in mind, and that I can speak with him in the French language has given me a certain position with him; but the ten years which lie between our ages need a bridge which his habitual reticence does not supply, and I can never decide whether his inexpressiveness is contemptuous or whether it is the result of reflection, or, possibly, of indecision. This makes me feel that I do not entirely trust him, for although one was warned by one's preceptors in youth against an unruly tongue, yet is not the contrary habit of silence very often due to selfishness or malice? I often realise as I take my leave of him how much my troubled and defeated self would give for a word of furtherance: with that word I could become his servant.

I have happier relations with a Spanish gentleman don Juan de Valdès, brother to the emperor's Latin secretary. He has a mind of great taste lighted up by some spiritual ray within, and he has so much instructed curiosity about Rome and the state of religion there that I shall persuade his Holiness to make him a chamberlain in the palazzo S. Pietro so that he may return with us.

There is little news from Florence, and his Holiness is consumed with impatience, for he thought the city must before now have capitulated, and the prince of Orange is forever making fresh demands for money to pay the troops. You will have heard that the Signoria have hired the lord Malatesta Baglioni to conduct the defence, and that Michelagnolo Buonorrotti has made bastions on the hill of San Miniato, enclosing it within the walls. You will realise that, had the prince been able to occupy this hill, he could have commanded the whole city with his guns. Nevertheless there can be but one end to it all. God grant that Caterina comes through it unscathed. I have tried in vain to discover from his Holiness what truth is in the tale that her hand is promised to the prince of Orange.

Mgr Pietro Bembo is here with the rest of the world, but is not happy, for he realises that the Holy Father will never give him the red hat which the Cardinal Farnese tells me has always been his real ambition. I suppose there is no place in the world called Stop, for it seems to myself that our old friend has had everything in the world that is of real worth.

I could not but reflect how just these words about Pietro Bembo were. This Venetian noble, after his storms and adventures, had come into the harbour of a marriage blest as that which Odysseus pictures for the white-armed Nausacaa, saying, better and fairer is nothing than this when husband and wife keep house together with one heart and mind between them, and that they themselves know it best. His home was a place where affection and intelligence had sway, where real

life was not lost sight of either in exotic splendour or in shabbiness, but where common needs and common duties were daily facts, and where his sons could be trained to nobility. In this home his passion for making for himself a place among the great writers of the world, and his rival passion for the science of making a garden had scope: while he was not debarred from all the dissipations of the collector of manuscripts and coins. Moreover this life in Padua had never been one of cloying domesticity, for from the first his villa had been a gathering place for all the scholars of Europe, and he was looked on as a prince of learning not only in Italy but in Germany too. And if much of his poetical work seems too unimpassioned to gain immortality, it is certain that in his *Sarca* he has verses of great beauty, and that any poet might envy him those with which the poem closes. He had all this, and yet I had long known that it did not content him, and that he must ever crave after the spurious glory of the Cardinalate. He went to Rome after Pope Clement's coronation with hopes that were vain, and perhaps this fruitless visit to Bologna may have had an added bitterness because the Republic of Venice had just given him the honourable position of its historiographer: that may have seemed to mark the limits of ambition for him.

I would now briefly recall events between the end of this winter of the year of our Lord 1530, and the beginning of the next winter when we were domiciled for several months in the palazzo Colonna in Rome.

The emperor left Bologna for Mantua on his way to Germany in the month of March, having consolidated while there his position in all Italy by the methods of his diplomacy. His Holiness travelled back to Rome a week later by way of Urbino and Foligno and entered the city without any public reception. It was reported that he was greatly depressed by the long-continued siege of his native city, and that he had said to the lord Bishop of Tarbes, the French envoy, that he wished Florence had never existed.

Ippolito, Alessandro, and the lord Luigi Gonzaga had all gone in the emperor's train to Mantua, and the accounts that the lady Isabella had from her spouse of the festivities there sounded like a fantasia. She herself was full of perturbation and resolution for, at the end of March, she had been summoned to Civit -Castellana to give evidence as to her marriage before the lord Giambatista Mentebuona and don Diego de Sota, commissioners appointed by the Pope and emperor.<sup>17</sup> The lady



Giulia, and Fra Girolamo, and an escort went with her, and they returned next day still in suspense about it all. I think that at this time the lady Giulia was very anxious to go north to her old home, for her mother, the lady Francesca dei Fieschi, had died at Sabbioneta soon after the turn of the year, and a rumour came to her that her father had taken priestly orders. But she could not abandon the lady Isabella in all her uncertainty and wretchedness. Presently we learnt that the lord Luigi had returned to his duty in the camp before Florence, and the hot weather began and still the siege dragged on.

The end however came on the 12th day of August when the city, ravaged with plague and famine and betrayed by the Baglioni who suddenly turned his guns against it, capitulated. A week previously the lord Francesco Ferucci had made a brave but unsuccessful attempt to bring a relieving force from Viterbo, and there had been an engagement at Gavinina in which the prince of Orange was slain, this making it no doubt easier for his Holiness to dictate his own terms. At the end of September we heard that Caterina, escorted by the lord Bishop Leonardo Tornabuoni and messer Ottaviano de' Medici, had arrived in Rome where her palazzo in the piazza Lombardia had been prepared for her. Ippolito was now back in Rome too from a summer villa he had purchased for himself at Tivoli, and there were rumours that his household in the palazzo of the Cancelleria was on a royal scale. It can be conceived that when the Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, who was now viceroy of Naples in the place of the prince of Orange, made the suggestion that we should leave Pagliano and spend the winter in the palazzo Colonna in the piazza SS. Apostoli, I, for one, was not backward in commendation of the plan. Our going was delayed however because the Tiber burst its bounds in October, sweeping away some of the bridges and many hundreds of houses and flooding the Borgo as far as the steps of S. Pietro on one bank, and reaching the steps of the Rotunda on the other, and causing much inconvenience and distress.

I had a great desire and curiosity to see Caterina again and to learn of all that had befallen her. I realised that there would be no suggestion that I should return to the service of the Medici, for the Pope, and her uncle the duke of Albany<sup>18</sup> who had come to Rome to meet her, had placed Caterina in the care of her father's widowed cousins, the lady Maria Salviati and the lady Caterina Cibo; and these ladies, with their children, Cosimo de' Medici and the lady Giulia of Camerino, who

were both of Caterina's own age, were now dwelling in the palazzo Medici. We left Pagliano on a November day, and as soon as all the gear was unpacked and the household ritual established I sent a letter to messer Ottaviano de' Medici, praying him, should he be still in Rome, to pay me a visit. He came without delay, and with so much to relate to an audience as interested as myself, that what he told me copiously overflowed that first occasion.

There was first of all what he had to relate about the siege itself and all the privations and dangers accumulating as the months went on. He said that his Holiness had now put the temporary direction of affairs into the hands of Bartolomeo Valori, Francesco Guicciardini, and Roberto Acciaiuoli, and that he himself had been glad to leave the city, for although an amnesty had been declared for all opponents of the house of Medici, that was already being violated, and it distressed him a good deal. It was only after a while that I was able to direct the conversation to the subject of Caterina.

Messer Ottaviano told me that she had grown very much since I had parted with her three years ago, and was tall for her twelve years, and that this, and the sedateness of her normal manner made her seem more womanly than her age. But he believed the apparent maturity to be merely result of all that her young spirit had been called upon to face. It had made itself clear as they rode with her on their road to Rome that she had a lively disposition and an amusing tongue, but she was always patently on her guard: after all, said he laughing, the escort of kind, elderly men had hitherto meant that she was probably changing her lot for the worse. Leonardo Tornabuoni had had an ecclesiastical as well as a human curiosity about the 3 convents in which she had been caged, but what she disclosed in answer to his questioning was not without guile. I had a curiosity about the convents myself, and I write down here as much as I was able to discover of the circumstances of Caterina's removal from the one to the other and another and back again. I had some of it from Caterina herself.

The Reverend Mother at Santa Lucia did not fail in remonstrance when Caterina was taken from her care in that remembered month of August and thrust behind the neighbouring walls of Santa Caterina di Sienna; for not only was it a slur on the anti-Medicean complexion of her community, but she had some humanity, and had knowledge of the rule of her sister Abbess. The child was delivered over to the nuns of Santa Caterina without an attendant, and they took away the wardrobe sent with her and gave her coarse garments and the clumsy slippers they

themselves wore. She had a cell like their own, shared their fasts and sometimes even their vigils, and was severely beaten for falling asleep in the chapel; more than once for some trivial fault she was shut up in the dark. No attempt seems to have been made to give her any education. As we knew at *Le Selve*, a revival of the religious extravagances of the Dominican *Girolamo Savonarola*, had flared up in Florence this summer, partly induced by the plague; but it was the plague which eventually delivered *Caterina*, for two of the lay sisters died of it, and the lord de *Velley*, the French envoy, was able to insist in December that she must be removed to the only convent free from the pestilence. He came for her himself on foot at midnight with two torchbearers and an order which he had wrung from the Signoria, and I cannot but realise the terror of the experience for the child.<sup>19</sup> A hand held hers, but it was that of a stranger taking her to an unknown destination: it was piercingly cold, and there were neither moon nor stars, and she shuffled with her clumsily shod feet over the paving stones between the black houses clutching her cloak around her, and conscious of the furtiveness of the expedition, and of the menace that seemed to lurk everywhere: and then another high, forbidding wall in a silent street, a grill, an unexplained door she must enter, a farewell to a gentleman who at least had a kind voice. I can picture to myself the revulsion of the child's feelings when she found herself in the fire-lit and candle-lighted chamber prepared for her in the convent of *la Santissima Annunziata delle Murate* in the *via Ghibellina*, and the comedy of the glee and excitement of the fluttering nuns, so many of whom were connected with the Medici by the intricacy of Florentine relationships. *Caterina* has told me that no broth was ever so palatable as that in the basin they brought her, no bed so soft and warm as that in which they laid her. And in the morning, when she woke at last, there was *Paola* all smiles and tears at the foot of her bed, and breaking presently into shrill ejaculations over the wretched garments that must be donned for that day for want of others.

The rooms set apart for *Caterina* in the convent were those in which her relative the lady *Caterina Sforza* had spent her last years, and the lord de *Velley* came presently to make sure that all was well with her. I conjecture that it was through him that funds for her maintenance and for her education were supplied. Re-assurance was thus brought to the isolated child, and I can realise that, when her growing intelligence made her aware of her French blood and her French inheritance and her cousinship to the king of France himself, she began to feel an assurance that made her youthful lot among the nuns and boarders of the convent

easier for her: for there were two camps within as without its walls, and realisation that her safety had nothing, in the last resort, to do with either of them, no doubt kept her small feet on a middle path of prudence and dignity. It seems an inflation to write thus about so young a girl, but she came to Rome in the year of our Lord 1530 with a manner that was formed for life. Its distinction and her pleasing voice were of inheritance, and very reminiscent of Pope Leo himself, but there was a self-controlled graciousness which was certainly the fruit of having learnt the uses of diplomacy in a school of many intrigues.

This Benedictine convent of the Murate, where I myself had once thought of becoming a boarder, had always been a fashionable one, and tales about it had always been rife in Florence on that score. It is not unlikely that zara and biscaca were played by the inmates and that gambling with dice too went on in a mild degree, and there may, in the past at all events, have been the occasional incident of the admission of a lover; but in the years Caterina was there, what was worldly or scandalous must have been overshadowed by the seriousness, first of all of the plague, and then of the siege itself. At all events if there was frivolity in the diversions of the immured ladies, there were accomplished, and even learned, women among them, and Caterina's education under the direction of the Reverend Mother was as exhaustive as she could have received anywhere; and as I knew of old, she was a diligent pupil with a clear mind. But about a month before the city capitulated it all came to an end quite suddenly.

It has always seemed to me that Caterina's exodus from the Murate was of the nature of farce, and what is clear is that the long strain of the siege had shaken the equanimity of one and all. The Signoria allowed a small device in pastry to rouse it to commit a futility, and the convent itself responded by becoming hysteric. Some of the Sisters who were noted for their confectionery would send presents of their handiwork to relations in the city, and a basket of this pastry was one day intercepted in some way, and it was brought to official notice that at the bottom of it were biscuits on which the *palle* had been punched by their indiscreet maker. Thereat the hue and cry was raised that the convent of the Santissima Annunziata was a hot-bed of Medicean plotting, and demands were made to seize Caterina, and wild proposals to poison or outrage her were discussed by the more violent spirits. The Signoria were, I conceive, obliged to notice the clamour, and they decided to remove the child to the convent of Santa Lucia once again. Thus it was that messer Salvestro Aldobrandini the chancellor and secretary, with messer

Antonio Nerli and two other commissioners appeared one morning in July at the door in the via Ghibellina, and suspecting the partisan attitude of the Reverend Mother, they demanded to see Caterina herself without disclosing their errand. They had obviously relied on their kind tongues and beguiling countenances to make their task an easy one, and I suppose that they must have been taken aback to encounter intrepid resistance and to find that the slim girl was neither to be cajoled nor overawed, even when driven to the final resort of tears. They went away at last, but not without saying that they should have to return on the morrow, and whether the steps taken to baffle the excellent gentlemen when they came back next morning were of Caterina's own invention or no I am not clear: in any event she must have had full encouragement and help from the nuns. No one can have been really persuaded that her life was in danger if she left the walls of this particular convent, but it was heaven-sent drama to confront messer Aldobrandini on his fresh arrival with the convent grill and Caterina behind it in a nun's dress, and telling him that she had cut off her hair and had taken the veil for life. She always laughed over the tale with a real sense of her own absurdity, and it seems to have been some hours before they had her on a mule, still in her conventual garb, and were with her across the city to Santa Lucia. Here she was well treated and not unhappy, and in a month's time the siege was at an end, and she back in the Murate once more, and then in another month to Rome.

I learnt that Ippolito had ridden far up the Flaminian Way to meet Caterina, going with all the ostentation which was now his wont; and I could not but agree with messer Ottaviano that the display was barbaric, when he told me of a bodyguard of Moors carrying lances and magnificently mounted, of a company of Tartars armed with bows; and all this a daily spectacle in the streets of Rome. The black mare with the white fetlock was now only a memory, and Ippolito's favourite mount was a showy roan which he had spurred ahead of his escort when he caught sight of the travellers from Florence. The kind messer Ottaviano had a tear in his eye as he described to me the coming together again of the cousins, both dismounted to greet one another, and seeming to himself, of a sudden, pathetic pigmies in the vast waste under the illimitable sky. Their great affection, which he remembered of yore, had now apparently its right reticence, but it was something lambent and human, something of a true integrity amid the spurious or squalid

emotions of fashionable Rome. I questioned him rather closely about it all, and he proved himself to be of a very sympathetic understanding about these two and their expansion into one another's lives. Caterina he said was acquiring all the Medici love of sport under Ippolito's tutelage, and the boy Cosimo and the lady Giulia Varano being included in the hunting parties, as well as some of the Florentine gentles who were in Rome, robbed them of particularity and made them into a riot of merry youth. Ippolito seemed no more than a boy himself on these joyous days in the hunting grounds outside the walls, and it was the ingenuous boy who would slip unattended through the alleys between his own palazzo and that of the Medici and sulk if he found Caterina held in thrall by her tutors. The ladies Maria Salviati and Caterina Cibo had some ado to regulate it all and assert their authority without rousing Ippolito abruptly to adopt the pose of Eminence; for in these days he was a chameleon incarnate, messer Ottaviano said. And then he told me that, between work and play, Caterina herself was the most occupied person in Rome, for, by the direction of his Holiness she was having tuition in every branch of learning and the arts. Pope Clement displayed affection for her, and she had been to dine with him, the duke of Albany and the duke of Gramont being of the company.<sup>20</sup> Ippolito gave as his opinion that the French marriage was still a possibility, king Francis being very anxious to rescue his Holiness from the imperial stranglehold. The emperor on his part was pressing the veteran duke of Milan as a husband: while the young duke of Ferrara, the king of Scotland, and the duke of Richmond (bastard brother to the king of England) had all been put forward at one time and another, but rejected for varying reasons.

Messer Ottaviano contrived an invitation for me from the ladies of the Medici before he returned to Florence (going back to the imbroglio there with a heavy heart). I was bidden to supper, and, attended by my woman, I made my way in the still, afternoon light across the Corso, past the little church where I had been married, past the Rotunda, and then through the piazza Capprettari with its vendors of goat flesh and the palazzo which Pope Leo had built there for the lord Giuliano. The palazzo Medici had suffered all the rigours of the sack, and one of the first cares of his Holiness on his return to Rome had been to apply the revenues of the lady Caterina to its restoration. It had been remodelled by the architect Paolo Marucelli who had given it a carved frieze, and its frontage on the piazza Lombardia had now a very noble air. I was ushered into the great chamber with its windows looking two

ways on to the cortile and the garden, and there I found the family group of the two widowed Medici ladies, the three children, and Ippolito in doublet and hose with his dark curls clustering round his head. He caught Caterina by the hand, and they came across the floor to greet me. She kissed me very sweetly and I recognised all the soft, cautious sophistication of the well-brought-up girl. Her complexion was still pale, and her hair thin and poor, but she was well-grown and I was greatly struck by her look of vitality and good health. For me she would always be too reminiscent of Pope Leo, but I saw that when she came to marriageable age in two or three years time she would probably be very personable, with a good figure and exquisite hands and feet. I recognised presently too that all messer Ottaviano had said about the maturity of her manner was true, for although it showed the desire to please it was not without a budding dignity. We were presently around the remembered supper table, and Ippolito of course recalling old days, and telling the ladies Maria and Caterina Cibo absurd legends about the rigours of my rule over himself and Alessandro. They were plainly captive to the beguiling charm he could exercise when he chose, and I could not but be intrigued at the way he steered his course among their susceptibilities, earnest that Rome would have been saved if the lord Giovanni de' Medici had not been slain in an untimely hour, and promising to obtain for the lady Caterina a copy of the *Diálogo Mercurio y Caron*<sup>21</sup> of Juan de Valdès. The lord Giovanni had always neglected the lady Maria his wife, but she had made a fetish of him in life and was now making a fetish of his memory, and I judged (with what was perhaps a cruel clarity) that there was an intellectual and spiritual void behind the circumspect womanly grace which was very much acclaimed by all. The duchess of Camerino<sup>22</sup> was of an altogether different complexion, for her actions, I realised, would often be human actions and by no means perpetually feminine, and a wary heaven, discovering good stuff in her, had disregarded any prayers offered for her conventional deportment. I came to the knowledge that she had serious interests, and that the state of Holy Church, and that more especially in her own dominions, was one of them. Ippolito told me across the supper table on this occasion that, not content with being a Greek and Latin scholar, she was studying Hebrew too in order to read the scriptures in the original; to the which she returned that a like study would be very becoming in himself. But the talk only turned transiently on such matters, keeping itself for the most part to simple themes, and I could not but rejoice that Ippolito had this family circle for an anchorage. He

was obliged to go away after supper, so he said, but he made the request that he and I might come together there again, when he would bring his guitar and we would all make music.

It was malice which made me very willing to satisfy any curiosity the inmates of the palazzo Colonna might have about Ippolito and Caterina, and I gauged the lady Giulia's curiosity to be acute, notwithstanding that she contrived to avoid questioning me directly. She was finding conditions in Rome confusing, and she was not as yet sufficiently self-assured to mould them to her own purposes. Her prestige had suffered a little because of the affair of her brother and the lady Isabella and the undignified suspense in which his Holiness was keeping them, but I believe she assigned to personal failure much that had its reason only in the plight of an altered world. Rome, as she remembered it under the wing of the marchioness of Mantua, had gone, and she did not at first bend her mind to acceptance of that. Perhaps it was the way of life of her cousin the Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga which first illuminated her: for she had anticipated that he would make festival at her coming, but she found him absorbed in the affairs of his Mantuan diocese and only a bird of passage in his Roman palazzo.

Some of the Cardinals were perhaps living very much as before, but to the majority a great sobering had come, and those who were Bishops sought to emulate the example of his Eminence Gian Matteo Giberti who had set before himself the complete reform of his see of Verona.<sup>23</sup> Even Cardinal Ridolfi had left his palazzo on the Quirinale and had gone to his diocese of Vicenza. The pulse of Rome was in fact beating but feebly; the terrible incidents of the sack would prevent many noble families from opening their doors again until a generation had passed, and most of the shops which supplied luxuries had not restarted business. All the artists, poets and scholars had escaped northwards and many had drifted to Venice—and most of the well-known courtesans too. Tullia was however in Rome, and it was told me that the lord Filippo Strozzi, who had been summoned from Lyons by his Holiness to disentangle his finances, was always with her.

Had it not been for this drab and lifeless condition of society, Ippolito's flamboyant way of life would not have concentrated the attention of all the inveterate busybodies on himself. The immense palazzo which Cardinal Riario had built, and which, after the Petrucci plot and his banishment for complicity in it, had been given to Cardinal Giulio de'



Medici, was now the palazzo of the Cancelleria, and of Ippolito as Vice-Chancellor. It had always held its pride of place as the most splendid dwelling in Rome, but in the opinion of many it would be surpassed in grandeur by that which Cardinal Farnese was building without opprobrium close by, and the Farnese household was quite as large as that which in the case of the younger Cardinal caused so much malevolent comment. Yet it was vain to deny his extravagances, and in the clouds of my own imagination I saw them as manifestation of pride warring with fate—battle that was without the vital rapture of self outcast. But for his tenderness for Caterina, Ippolito seemed to me now to be all self, concentrated on proving to the world and to his own frustrated soul that his will would yet find its own. That his being was all set on wiping out the shame of those last hours in Florence three years ago was clear enough, because his palazzo had a welcome for any Florentine of any party, and exile or no. And the obliteration of that other and unavailing hour at Pagliano was, as I realised, to be accomplished too.

The lady Giulia could not fail but to be baffled by the Cardinal de' Medici's blithe renewal of their relations. Last Christmas Eve the flames on the hearth of her wardrobe had cast his shadow on the hangings behind him, and then the shadow had suddenly been there no longer, and there had been ever since (I knew it unerringly) a restlessness, a desire to be right with her own self, to see him again, and to contrive somehow to shape a flower out of an unbecoming memory. He had charged the lord Luigi to say to both the Colonna ladies that he hoped to help to make their sojourn in Rome pleasant, but in the fortnight that went by before I was summoned to the palazzo Medici, no word had been brought from him, and after I had contrived my bland account of the happy gaiety of the Medici family circle, the lady Giulia's curiosity and impatience found its vent in a letter dictated to messer Porrino, in which she set forth all her anxiety about the lady Isabella and her brother, and asked for Ippolito's intervention with his Holiness, saying she knew that he had always been the lord Luigi's friend in the matter and that thrust and impetus were now needed.

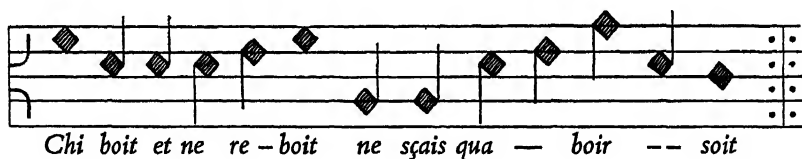
Ippolito came in state to the palazzo Colonna next day. The lady Giulia may have hoped for an encounter that would be more intimate, and where she should play the leading part, but directly the Colonna major-domo heard of the impending visit he had made it his business to discover the Cardinal's wishes, and he had caused the state chambers to

be swept and garnished. We watched from their windows the arrival in the cortile of the four coaches with black horses, preceded and surrounded by innumerable servants in the purple liveries of the Medici, and followed by the mounted Moorish bodyguard with its lances; some of them came through the archway, the main body remaining in the piazza without. Then we must leave the windows and stand to receive the Cardinal. I could not but reflect how incredible it all was as I watched the procession advancing through the salas beyond, his Eminence coming with his hat and parasol carried before him on cushions, with his secretary and trainbearer, and his gentleman-in-waiting bearing his beretta with gloved hands, and with I know not what of further pomp. Ippolito looked like a walking flame in the midst of it all, and when his dark eyes met mine own as the lady Giulia swept to the floor to kiss the sapphire on his finger, I knew that he felt like a walking flame too. But in two minutes we had all made our reverences, and he and the lady Giulia and the lady Isabella were seated, and he had crossed his legs, and was laughing, and full of talk and completely at his ease. He meant to be completely at his ease for evermore. When Heaven has grudged its perfect gift we are released from a responsibility; refusal of it is emancipation, and the emancipated has licence to be merry.

It followed of course that the duchess of Trajetto was not altogether content with the gay insouciance of the Cardinal de' Medici. He had taken the initiative and he kept it. In all the weeks that followed he was gallant and assiduous, but it was not long before he had established that he desired nothing beyond the recognition of himself as the conventional worshipper at the shrine of beauty and high station, ready with all the orthodox affirmations of hopeless adoration and a broken heart. I had been trained in the fashion of all that at Urbino, and realised my maturity when I found myself considering it all as lumber, and out-of-date as a social habit. I felt it was only the elderly poets, like messer Molza and messer Flaminio, who were keeping it alive because their livelihood depended on organised flattery of the great ladies who had the life of courts in their hands. On the other hand, a younger generation perhaps found it was useful to retain the convention as a mask: it had always been a useful mask, and I wondered what Ippolito's real self was doing behind it, and behind all the other exuberances of his existence.

He entertained us several times, and one evening in particular has remained in my memory as an occasion when it would have been valid

to ask with Petronius in his *Satyricon* if riches can never be the sister of good sense, and if this was a feast in the house of a gentleman. I say to myself, here and now, that Ippolito had deliberately meant those who would to moralise thus, for as the lady Giulia's little procession emerged from between the lackeys with their torches on the stair, and as our trains billowed along the open gallery above the cortile, my eye was caught by a magpie in a gilded cage hanging against one of the pillars, and coming away I looked up at it again, remembering that such another cage hung in the doorway of the house of Telemachus, and realising that it had been placed there of design. This is not to say that the supper party in the palazzo in the Campo Fiore rivalled that classic orgy, but as I watched each dish coming to table to the accompaniment of music and preceded by torch-bearers, as I looked at the immobile faces of the Moors who lined the walls of the immense sala, at the over-plus of hustling servitors in their purple damask liveries, at the sideboards piled with gold plate, at the jewelled wine-cup in my hand, I asked myself if such a way of living was not an overspill of human energy against which intelligence should rebel; inclined to this philosophy, I daresay, because I had a particular care to be sparing in what I drank, being conscious that nearly everyone else was drinking rather too much.



So Ippolito sang, raising his goblet, and it was only Tullia who shook her madonna-like head at him. The gathering was one at which the lady Isabella should have been the most notable guest, for it was given in honour of the fact that his Holiness had sent Msgr Carnesecchi, his secretary, to us on the previous day to say that her marriage with the lord Luigi would now be accepted. The sorely-tried pair sat together and were toasted merrily by all, but it was Tullia who really dominated the evening, and this notwithstanding that the lady Giulia sat on the right of the host and the lady Giovanna d'Aragona, wife to the lord Ascanio Colonna,<sup>24</sup> sat on his left: the lady Giovanna was acknowledged at this time to be the most beautiful princess in Italy, for it was not until some years later that the lady Giulia won to her world-wide reputation for a paramount loveliness.

Madama Tullia sat almost opposite to me at table between the lord

Filippo Strozzi and the lord Baccio Valori, who had been commissary for the emperor and his Holiness in Florence after the siege, but who had been removed (so I learned) on the advice of messer Ottaviano and was now governor of Romagna. He was personable and blithe, and minded, as I saw, to play on the jealous susceptibilities of the lord Filippo. This one had addressed me very civilly before supper, asking after my welfare, and I watched him now with interest, and saw that what was said in Rome about his passion for this courtesan was no more than the truth: he was unhinged, and wine was making his mood a well-nigh savage one. A paper was presently circulating the table, and as the Strozzi got possession of it I saw Ippolito's smiling eyes resting on him. I knew that Ippolito frequented Tullia's receptions and this was a sonnet he had written in her honour. It came round to us presently and I astonished my neighbour by saying that I thought it flaccid and non-sense.

Fairest, thou hast thine orbit in a light divine  
 of which thou art thyself the radiance and the sun;  
 from that far firmament thy zephyr voice doth come  
 with all the supernatural sweetness that is thine.

My fever'd soul aspires on wings of love outspread  
 to that fair heavenly place lit by thy lambent flame;  
 dazzled, and rashly gazing, calls upon thy name,  
 then scorched and burning falls thro' space to join the dead.

Thine are exalted beauty and enchanted song,  
 thine all the shining glory of the heavenly spheres;  
 and though love has no human meaning in thine ears

I pray thee heed my weary suffering and my wrong;  
 turn thou thy saintly face upon my bitter grief,  
 give to my wretchedness a truce, to anguish peace.<sup>25</sup>

The courtesan had fair hair parted over a white brow, and her velvet gown, which was made with puckered sleeves sewn with pearls in the new French fashion, matched her singularly blue eyes.<sup>26</sup> She had small and regular teeth, but she smiled rarely and her manner had a perfect poise: she was indeed less animated than any other woman there, for even the lady Giulia was of a determined gaiety and she and Ippolito engaged in a constant clash of wits. We left the table at last and then, in the range of great salas beyond, the hours passed in dancing and with the interludes of masques: one of these I remember had a dragon, and a maiden nigh unclothed, her rescuer being in golden armour with

naked attendants who carried cornucopias which emitted flame: there was a Moorish interlude too, very wild and interesting, the actors all having tall ostrich plumes on their heads.

The lady Giulia had refused to dance, but when I discovered that Tullia was minded to do the same and to hold a little court within our sight and hearing, I contrived that we should move into another sala, and we were seated there with Msgr Carnesecchi and others of a sober sort, when Ippolito came to us, bringing with him a gentleman in the uniform and chain of a papal chamberlain whom he made known to the duchess as don Juan de Valdès. Remembering what had been written to me of him from Bologna, I considered him carefully as he stood very gracefully by the lady Giulia's chair engaged in converse with her: Ippolito presently took a stool beside me for a few moments and I murmured to him that don Juan combined much countenance with an air of great reserve. Ippolito returned to this under his breath with a certain gusto, that he saw the reserve melting beneath his eyes: then he added that I must not mistake his jesting, for here was one who was only taking this earth on the way to heaven, and all women were his sisters. Ippolito went away to join the dancers: he was clad from head to foot in scarlet, in obvious mockery of the red of the Cardinalate, with a damask doublet opening over a vest of Venetian lace, and with silken hose and velvet shoes to match.

Monsignor Carnesecchi came and occupied the stool he had left. We had found him friendly, and realising him as willing to be yet more so, I questioned him anon about Ippolito and his Holiness, relating how closely I had been concerned with the three Medici children in Florence. He told me that Alessandro was now with the emperor, the Pope having asked for the invitation in order to remove him from Ippolito's neighbourhood. He spoke of Ippolito's great gifts of mind and person, and said, with a concern which I felt to be real, that what seemed to him far more deplorable than exorbitance of living was that the Cardinal made little effort to cultivate friendship with those of standing and repute, and allowed himself to be on terms that were far too easy with the smaller poets and the soldiers of fortune and the other usual hangers-on of a court such as this. I had to reply that I thought it was the position into which Ippolito had been forced against his will which made an isolation for him. In these days of a universal searching of the spirit, he must, I said, be conscious that odium attached to him because he had all this rank and privilege without any ecclesiastical *onus*, and I felt sure his pride was sensitive to the censorious attitude of the better minds, lay as

well as clerical. I asked if effort could not be made to persuade him to take Holy Orders and regularise it all, and Mgr Carnesecchi shook his head mournfully, saying that when the duke of Penna was once firmly established in Florence, and the Cardinal saw that his last hope of lordship there was gone, it might be possible to bring him to a more conformable state of mind: but at present his Holiness considered the whole subject better left alone, for he dreaded Ippolito's passion and grief whenever it was mentioned.

The winter months in the palazzo Colonna passed away very quickly. On the eve of the Epiphany (1531) we went in state to the palazzo San Pietro, the lady Giulia and the lady Isabella having been commanded to an audience. I recalled to myself the occasions when I had trailed through these self-same chambers in the wake of the duchess Elisabetta. They were once more splendid as ever, but they were not thronged with the vivacious crowd of other days and the whole atmosphere bespoke, not so much a dignified gravity, as a dispirited solemnity. The two Colonna ladies alone went forward, we others remaining in the throne room, but the Camerieri came presently to say that his Holiness would bless us, and I watched his coming as I knelt, wondering on a sudden if I too showed so grossly as he did the passage of years and the damage done to the countenance by mortal existence. I had not seen him since we had sat around the supper table at Poggio a Caiano: I did not of course seek to recall myself to him.

The lady Isabella was in high spirits as we came away, relating that the Holy Father had expressed a true sympathy with her trials, and had promised to be present when she was re-united to the lord Luigi. This promise, however, the Pope did not keep, sending his excuses at the last moment. The ceremony took place on the fifteenth day of January in the palazzo of the Cardinal Gonzaga, he himself coming from Mantua for the purpose.<sup>27</sup> We sat down to dinner afterwards, but it was all so belated that there was little of festivity about any of it, although Ippolito, conventionally attired under the roof of a brother-Cardinal, did his best to make some animation by toasting the spouses with a witty speech. They departed for Pagliano, sleeping at Marino on the way, and I, for my part, felt that here was good quittance of an unfortunate imbroglio.

The duchess herself remained in Rome until March, when she went northwards to revisit her old home. There was some to and fro between

ourselves and the palazzo Medici in the intervening weeks, the lady Caterina Cibo, in particular, being often with us; and this, I think, because the lady Maria, her cousin, believed the end of her own mental vision to be the end of all, and the lady Caterina's lively and natural eloquence of soul had more scope in the little circle which was beginning to form itself around the lady Giulia, and whose main interest, even in those early days, seemed to be religion. This was very natural, I suppose, in Rome, with preachers of penance occupying all the pulpits, and with religious processions in the streets on feast-days instead of the masquerades I remembered: the absence of all the Carnival festivities being sign of the changed temper of the times. Moreover many of our regular visitors came from the palazzo S. Pietro itself, and we heard of all the work of his Holiness in establishing episcopal missions in the new world beyond the seas, of his attempts to re-unite the kingdom of Russia to the Holy See, of the contumacy of the state of Venice in claiming the right to appointments to Bishoprics, of the nomination of certain Spaniards to the Cardinalate on the initiative of the emperor, of the inadequacy of the many enactments of reform at home and the virulence of heresy abroad, and of the demand coming from every quarter for a General Council of the Church. The lady Giulia was of necessity greatly stimulated and deeply interested by all this, and she began to realise that at Pagliano, on the road to nowhere, she would always be out of the main stream of events and could never draw this quality of company around her. Her mind turned towards the possibilities of her palazzo at Fondi on the Appian Way, and it being but poorly furnished, she began to make an industrious collection of hangings, of paintings, of antique statuary, of bronzes and articles of virtù, and of books and manuscripts.

In all this the Cardinal de' Medici gave his help. It was an interest they could share, and he was tireless in hunting out and reporting treasures to her, glad, I felt, to find a solid platform for the relationship he meant to establish. I find it difficult to put the certainty I had at this time into language, but I was conscious of an unseen battle of the spirit going on between them, and often had the sensation of banners straining in the wind. It was never an elementary give and take. For an example: the goldsmith Cellini had come from Florence and had been allotted a lodging in the Cancelleria palazzo, and the lady Giulia declined to commission him to set some jewels for her, saying that he asked exorbitantly for his work and that she did not always care for it. This annoyed Ippolito unduly, being, I suppose, a display of too much in-

dependence of taste and will: but the duchess was not left long content with the understanding of having piqued him, for he arrived in light-some mood on the following noon, and a secretary with him carrying a volume bound in green morocco tooled in gold, which proved to be the *Arcadia* of Jacopo Sannazzaro who had died at Naples in the preceding year. The lady Giulia, who had ever wished to possess the noted book, was not backward in expressing her pleasure in the gift, and Ippolito watched her, smiling to himself as she turned over the leaves with her slender hands. His mind was, he told her, that she, who was planning an *Arcadia* of her own, should read what was garnered in the cadences between these covers, and should learn of a land where love and friendship were a timeless pledge, where loyalty to true religion was never questioned, and where the great poets of all the ages were the constant companions of a life of simplicity amid the beauties of the rural scene. The lady Giulia had a wont of folding her under lip slightly over her upper lip when she was thinking of a repartee, and when her red lips had parted again she was saying that before she constructed the ideal life at Fondi she should need, she saw, to pay a visit to the villa Catillo. I was certain that no rumour could yet have reached her of the mistress Ippolito kept in this villa of his at Tivoli, and, after an instant of paralysis, I saw that he, too, realised how innocent of guile she was. I had the sudden sensation that I was looking on at a play with two actors in masks in front of a black marble wall. In another minute Ippolito was saying easily that he must certainly make a festa at Tivoli when the lady duchess returned to Rome, and that he had acquired another and most amusing buffoon called Gradasso.

It was a week later that the lady Giulia started on her journey to Mantua, taking with her the wife of the captain of her escort and serving maids only. She said to me that her grandmother's household at Gazzuolo was now a very simple one, for the lady Antonia was ninety years of age; and I was glad enough to be spared the fatigues of the expedition. All the younger ladies were disposed of in their homes and elsewhere, and I was to go to the palazzo Medici, where Caterina's dower chests were already in preparation, and where, so the duchess of Camerino said with laughing amiability, a little good taste was much needed. The lady Giulia shed a few tears when I came to her bedside on the evening before her departure, and I could not but be mindful of the essential loneliness of her position in this world, realising that if the fire of her own spirit made it endurable in a general way, there were also moments, such as this, when she felt but a waif in the wilderness of her



own and her husband's family, all secretly envious to a man (and of a certainty to the lord Luigi himself) of the gifts nature and fortune had bestowed on her, and of her mastery of the still rarer gift of profiting by them.

Alone in my own chamber that night, I had some searching of the conscience about my own relationship to her. It was not a relationship of choice, but had occurred as one of the circumstances of existence, and, not only did age divide us, but much that was fundamental, not so much in character as in unspoken aims. Because I had not pledged myself to any of the fidelities of love or friendship, I was free to appraise and to judge: yet I had to say to myself that to bring to my association with her the same integrity and loyalty which love itself pre-supposes, would be to come to one of the nobler acceptances of life. I told myself that I fastened far too frequently on criticism of mere human accidents, and was never whole-hearted in appreciation, and that this in itself was a monster sign of the mediocrity of my mind and soul and spirit.

But re-established among Medici interests in the piazza Lombardia, I very rapidly found that I was ignoring all that was apart from them; and Ippolito seemed to have put all thoughts of the lady Giulia away as completely as I had, for it was now a positive thing that Alessandro, still with the emperor in Flanders, would be established as ruler in Florence in the course of the summer. We knew that there were, continually, stormy scenes in the palazzo S. Pietro which left his Holiness distraught in mind and ravaged in body but which never shook his purpose; and Ippolito, fresh from one of these tempestuous interviews, strode in on us one afternoon as we sat at the supper table. Pallid, and with blood-shot eyes, he sat eating little and drinking far too much, and presently the lady Maria and the lady Caterina, after exchanging looks, sent all three of the young people away, the boy Cosimo sulking and inclined to resist, and only going finally because Ippolito himself snarled what was imperative. I sat on resolutely, and presently the servants left us too, and we three women were alone with the Cardinal. He filled his goblet once more from the flagon on the silver tray at his side, and then he took off his sapphire ring and dropped it into the wine, and looked derisively from one of us to the other, asking who was going to be first with an exhortation on the vice of drunkenness.

*Why do you quarrel with me for drinking? Does not the dark earth drink the rain, and the sun drink the sea?*

*When I drink wine bitter thoughts leave me, violence is restrained and grief assuaged. Grief? I am well enough practised in it.*

*When I drink wine rapture is born and grace brought forth; my heart is aflame and begins to murmur of the muse. I cast anxiety and good advice to the winds that blow over the sea. I sing the laughter of life. I hold a girl in my arms and sing of Aphrodite.*

This is the substance of what he said to us as he sat there at the table, splendid and insolent. I thought the words might have some classic source although I did not recognise it. He got on to his feet when he had come to an end of them; his mood had changed, and he said quietly that it were best to take leave while his legs were yet steady enough to carry him.

Two days later a letter from him was brought to me:

Honoured and perhaps Only Friend:

I leave Rome at dawn tomorrow for Florence. No one but yourself is to know of my going, for if the news comes to the ears of his Holiness I shall be pursued and turned back. The four gentlemen I take with me will not learn of our destination until we are far on the road. If I have fortune with relays of horses I hope to push on without a pause.

The one stable and worthy thing about me is my ambition to be a great and just Ruler in Florence and to make of it a city which shall be at unity with itself and the desire of the whole earth. To waver in degrading perplexity between the outward state that has been thrust upon me and that inward passion is a hell I can no longer endure; and if I am to act it must be at once.

The emperor keeps Alessandro with him and does not send him to Florence, but this, I believe, is only because he sees in the delay a means of persuading his Holiness to the General Council which they demand in Germany with increasing vigour of expression. Pressure was brought on the Balìa last month to elect Alessandro as Gonfalonier of Justice. This was of course a shattering of all the most cherished laws and customs of the commonwealth, and the election shows the reign of terror which prevails: yet, even so, twelve votes were cast against it.

It is certain that everything in Florence is at present in the utmost confusion and misery, and the dream of plucking a personal success singlehanded out or it all will seem to you, I know, an insanity: but to make the dream into some manner of achievement, whether of life or of death, is the only fitting conclusion of debate with myself on the matter.

It will not unlikely be the achievement of death, for there will be cravens in every party who may think to serve their own fortunes best by swinging my body out of one of those lofty apertures provided for the purpose at the back of the palazzo Publico;<sup>28</sup> and it is because I face this possibility that I write to

you. There will be few to pity me and none to praise me when I am gone, but I think that Caterina might grieve somewhat for a space, and yourself, dear lady, might be a little sorry for a short time. Say to Caterina that for lamentation I would have remembrance which all-conquering time shall not make dim.

Ippolito de' Medici: Card.

The palazzo of the Cancelleria in Rome this twenty-ninth day of March 1531.

I slipped a largesse into the hand of the night watchman as, with cloak and hood, and with rosary and missal displayed, I emerged into the piazza Lombardia with the dawn. I took the via Ripetta because that was the way Ippolito would go to the Flaminian gate, and I was still some way from it when I heard horse's hoofs behind me. I stood flattened against a doorway in the dim, saffron light and Ippolito recognised me and drew up. I saw at once that, within hearing of the riders behind him, it was impossible for him to do more than throw me a casual word; and in a moment they had all passed on. But, while my heart bled, I was glad that if I was to have a last memory of him it should be this. In his unremarkable riding dress, with his clear eyes and bronzed skin, he was the combination of quiet resolve and perfect health and fitness. He seemed to embody, for the first time in any encounter with him, a great simplicity, to be at one with nature and with fate, linked to endless effort and to august issues.

I was at my needle next morning when the lady Caterina Cibo came into the chamber, and sinking into a chair near me asked me to guess at the latest madness of Ippolito: then telling me that his Holiness had learned of the exodus before noon yesterday, that a courier had been sent off instantly with the command to reach Florence first, and that the lord Baccio Valori was leaving today to persuade, bribe, or force the truant to return. I sat there passing my needle in and out and wondering greatly who had betrayed it all. Of course it might have been anybody, for excess of caution was not one of Ippolito's characteristics. And I saw too that there would be of course no heroic outcome of the enterprise. There is a time of glory called tomorrow, but tomorrow comes and is always exactly like today.

A month later, and again at my needle, I sat with the lady Caterina Cibo and the lady Maria Salviati in the loggia of his Holiness' villa on Monte Mario, and Ippolito in our midst, with one leg swinging over the other, was refreshing himself with wine and water after his ride from

Rome, and was relating the details of his late adventure with complete nonchalance, and without either rhetoric or cynicism; indeed, it would seem without any personal feeling at all. Emotion would in any case not have been politic before this audience.

This villa on Monte Mario<sup>29</sup> had been built by Pope Clement when he was yet a Cardinal, and it had been pillaged in the sack and was but promiscuously garnished. It stood among groves and orchards, with the summit of the hill intervening between itself and Rome, and its high loggia, decorated with designs in stucco, looked down on a stretch of pastures through which the Tiber flowed. It was a peaceful and lovely spot, and I thought it to be like a quiet mind in the loud world, for Ippolito's narrative seemed to do no damage to its serenity, although the Medici ladies had tears in their eyes more than once, especially when he told of the devastation all around Florence: he saying that, before the oncoming of the prince of Orange, every villa had been stripped of all it possessed by its owners, and that the beleaguering forces had completed the disrobing, taking even the horse-rings from the walls. To hurry through this desert waste, said Ippolito, was like the struggle to awake from an oppressive dream, and, although to plunge under the porta Romana would be to make haste towards a hope that was not to be distinguished from fear, yet he had come to the sight of the tall gateway with a sense of the largeness and overflow of destiny and a sudden release of the mind, for it had not been possible on the road to think of more than one's horse and one's own body. But the instant the gates were opened, as they were without parley, he had realised that no exercise of wits would be required of him, for in front of the wineshop inside the gate stood a troop of horse, and he was riding presently captive in their midst by the side of their captain, and over the remembered bridge and through the streets beyond it. It would seem that the Pope's courier had forestalled him by three hours only, and had won the race, so Ippolito said, owing to his own foolishness in snatching a few hours of sleep on the road while fresh horses were being obtained. He was relieved, and a good deal surprised, to find that he was to go to the house of messer Ottaviano in the via San Gallo, and when he dismounted there, feeling somewhat like a whipped hound, he was received as a Prince of the Church: a personage he had some difficulty in recollecting himself to be.

Archbishop Schömburg would never have been employed in Florence by the emperor Charles as his trusted agent, continued Ippolito, unless he were of a singular astuteness, and he had certainly

betrayed how able he was, because, after this preliminary display of control, the Cardinal de' Medici found himself with perfect liberty to come and go. Thus he had swiftly discovered from his own contacts that the spirit of Florence had become a thing quite formless and even obscene, the curses that no one dared to explode escaping as a vapour poisonous and penetrating. All men, whether rich or poor, priest or layman, were infected to extravagance with suspicions and circumspections, and incredulity about all things on earth and in heaven itself, and even if it were not that the plague had once again begun to take its dreaded toll, it would be impossible today to expect nobility of either thought or action from any Florentine; no standard raised there would rally even reckless youth around it, for youth had had its schooling too.

The lady Caterina Cibo exclaimed continually at all this, saying that, if such was the spirit of the city now, it seemed a marvel that it had put up so redoubtable a defence, for men's souls did not turn craven in a night. And then it was that Ippolito told us without comment of all that the emissaries of his Holiness had accomplished in the matter of torture and executions, giving us name after well-known name as we sat there in stupefied silence. It was not possible to conceive of it as reality.

Ippolito turned presently to lighter themes, telling how well ordered everything was in the house in the via San Gallo, and quite beyond his previous remembrance of it; messer Ottaviano accounting for much both indoors and out by saying it had been a charity during the siege to give commissions to the artists and sculptors in the city. He was once more occupied at the behest of his Holiness in refitting the Medici palazzo, producing its treasures from up his sleeve in a way that seemed to afford the Archbishop of Capua much diversion. Giovanni da Udine was very busy decorating the ceilings in the via Larga with stucco and paintings, and Ippolito was asked if he could spare Giorgio Vasari from his work in the Cancelleria to paint frescoes beneath them. The suggestion that he should sacrifice the decoration of his own palazzo for the benefit of Alessandro seemed to him, said Ippolito, part of a general turpitude.<sup>30</sup> Poggio a Caiano was to be refurnished and refurbished as well, and, Andrea del Sarto now being dead, the task of finishing the decoration of the great sala had been given to Jacopo da Pontormo.

Ippolito had made enquiries after Michelagnolo Buonorrotti whose work at San Lorenzo had long lain neglected, and he said the man was believed to be in secure hiding somewhere in the city. This natural pre-

caution on the part of Michelagnolo was actually unnecessary, for no one else was capable of carrying out the completion of the Medici chapel, and the Pope had given a command that he was to be spared. He had been one of those stout for endurance, and it is clear to me from all I had learnt of the course of the siege from first to last, that the forced march and the bravery of the lord Francesco Ferucci might have availed, and that Florence might have succeeded in baffling the enemy, if the lord Malatesta Baglioni had not been a traitor from the beginning to the cause he was engaged to support: he keeping Baccio Valori outside the walls fully informed of everything. But it is vain to prate of what might have been, and even if the Republic had secured victory, there could have been no maintenance of it except with the most uncertain and unlikely furtherance of the king of France. I had a conversation alone with Ippolito on another day and he told me that it was because he had realised that, even if he could snatch an improbable personal triumph for himself, it would not be possible to sustain it in the face of all Italy; and that this had been his conviction before the breathless arrival of Baccio Valori who came laden with bribes for him to be of good behaviour. Ippolito laughed shamelessly, and I too could not but smile, when he said that he had wrung something of worth out of it all for the Pope had promised to pay his debts. I asked dryly if enough money existed in the papal exchequer for that, and had the reply that this would be the business of Filippo Strozzi, who might in his turn make an opportunity to drive some bargain over madama Tullia.

I was not unaware that among apprehensions that were papal, was one that was increasingly present in the minds of the ladies Caterina Cibo and Maria Salviati too. The French royal marriage for Caterina might turn out to be a mirage, and when the time came might even prove to be inexpedient,<sup>31</sup> but it was before all things needful that if France ever received her she must carry with her there the reputation of a cloistered upbringing; and the affection she and Ippolito had for one another was a topic sometimes lightly touched on by the foreign envoys in Rome, and no doubt not left unmentioned in their correspondence with their masters.<sup>32</sup> The duchess of Camerino thought it well to discuss the matter with me, asking me if I thought it possible to do anything authoritative in the face of Ippolito's all-pervading friendliness and the spell he cast upon us all: she confessing that she herself would miss his visits greatly. I related to her how that it had been ever the same

between these two and I made her laugh when I told how I had chastised Caterina at Poggio a Caiano: but I decided that I would say nothing of what I had witnessed one day recently in the grove. This grove lay beyond the formality of the garden and was entered by a gate flanked by two colossal figures, the work of the sculptor Bandinelli: winding paths ran through it, and coming quietly along one of these, I had had before my eyes Caterina weeping bitterly with her face against Ippolito's shoulder and his arm folded around her. He made her pull her kerchief from her skirt and wipe her eyes, and I watched through a screen of foliage as he led her to a stone seat beyond, and sat there with her still in his embrace and kissing her tenderly more than once.

At the beginning of June Ippolito moved all his court of followers to the villa Catillo at Tivoli, and no suggestion came from him for any further intercourse with us during the summer months. And immediately afterwards the lady Giulia arrived back in Rome, and there was a lading of wagons with all her purchases and gear, thither and hither from Pagliano, much of this and that, and then the long trail over the Alban hills and down the Appian Way to Fondi. The lady Isabella, who was again with child, went with us, for his Holiness had given the lord Luigi the command of the papal troops and had sent him into the Marches.

FONDI





# FONDI

WHEN I seek to make my sweeping memories of Fondi into an intelligible pattern, it is the insignificant strangeness of the place itself on which I would dwell first. Perhaps the town was not less wanting in significance than others of a like size that have nothing of the wonder and surge of striving cities—that hear and mark but little and can teach nothing. But its strangeness for my eyes lay in the squalor of its germination on either side of the Appian Way in a marshy plain which stretched westward to the sea and eastward to mountain crags which rose sheer from it. It had been a town as long ago as the empire of the Caesars, for the walls, which always looked to me like a languid convention, were of ancient Roman origin!<sup>1</sup> Later on, some overlord, perhaps of the Gaetani, had built the keep as a refuge for himself, as a prison for malefactors, or for this and that, and it was a much older structure than the palazzo on the other side of the highway. The two were connected by a drawbridge high over the heads of travellers to and from Naples, and when we came to them after trailing through the length of the town, I was sensible that I had reached something quite unexpected: I do not know exactly what I had anticipated, but it was not this. My eye had been caught by the tall keep ahead on the left, then I saw that we were passing a little piazza on the right with a church which someone said was the Cathedral: just beyond it we turned under an archway into a cortile, when dismounted made our way up steps into a loggia, entering from that on chambers with windows which had elaborate traceries of stonework and which over-looked a garden. My unit of comparison was always unconsciously the palazzo at Urbino, and I know that I felt this palazzo at Fondi to be at least no place where Popes or emperors could be entertained. But when established at Fondi, I became insensitive to its lack of form and oblivious of the swarm of human beings that hummed in the squalid alleys between the precincts of the palazzo and the northern gate: consciousness was only for the mountain barrier beyond the garden walls and over which the sun rose every morning, and for the shore, some half hour's ride away, where the new marvel of the sun setting beyond the sea could be experienced.

Ever since we had descended from the Alban hills on to the Pontine marshes the mountains had kept us company, rising sheer from the plain on our left, gaunt and grey against the sky. From the garden at Fondi they did not look so formidable as they did farther north, and their lower slopes were clothed with the growth of forests; but they did not fail to retain the aspect of the haunt of dread, although, when reached and penetrated, they discovered themselves to be scattered here and there with human eyries—little towns with keeps which were all the fiefs of the lady Giulia. But I had known mountains all my life, and it was our nearness to the shore of an ocean which had the greater entrancement and held me always enthralled. At Terracina, on the third day of our hot journeying, we had suddenly turned a corner when past the town, and there, in the glow of the early morning, was a yellow strand over which the dark blue water plashed in little creamy waves: it was an unforgettable vision, and it included my first sight of a grove of lemon trees, their branches bowed earthwards with the weight of their golden harvest. It had been a great disappointment when we lost sight of the sea again and must trail along the reedy margin of a lake—the lake of Fondi I was told. But we had not been long at Fondi when I realised how close to the shore we were, and I was able to persuade the lady Giulia to the first of many amber evenings when we would ride forth after the heat of the day, past pools and beds of reed, to a fringe of curved beach all strewn with pink shells, and take our supper under a gaily coloured tent that was sent ahead of us. One or another would touch a viol or a guitar: but I always felt this to be an intrusion, and that I needed only the music of the accumulated murmur of the smooth surf for ever searching the sand.

There was, in some sort, emancipation for the spirit in all this wide diversity of landscape, and did one ride southwards instead of eastwards, or westwards, it was to discover that the Appian Way began to mount among low hills at some little distance from the town, and that the road, bordered with cactus plants and prickly pears, led presently to the head of a green valley. A stream flowed through this valley, and was spanned by a bridge, and on either side of the bridge houses were clustered, climbing on the right bank steeply one above another to a pinnacle with a ruined castello.<sup>2</sup> This was the town of Itri and it, too, was a fief of the duchy, and a small garrison was quartered in the keep which was still more or less habitable.

Beyond Itri the Way wound through cove-shaped hills of bare limestone, and beyond them was a wide bay with the town of Formia

and the fortified harbour of Gaeta. It was long before we adventured as far as that, but I was one of a company which went forth to discover Sperlonga. This was a fishing village which lay between Gaeta and the little beach which we had made our own, and our journey took us through a tract of uneven country which was given over to cultivation of the vine which produces the Falernian wine. *Caecubus ager*, said Gandolfo Porrino profoundly; but I was beforehand with what he would produce next, for I had already looked up the ode of Horace and had committed the lines to memory. I recited them with unction.

Caecubum, et praelo domitam Caleno  
 Tu bibes uvam. Mea nec Falernae  
 Temperant vites, neque Formiani  
 Pocula colles.<sup>3</sup>

I was not allowed the last word however, for messer Porrino, headed off here, was instant with what Martial Quintillian had subsequently said about the celebrated vintage of B.C. 121 when L. Opimius who was consul saw the wine made and drank it when matured.<sup>4</sup>

We were a small company in those first, late summer and early autumn days, and we were kept fully occupied, for the lady Giulia's spirit was on wings in the high excitement of bringing all the palazzo into relation with her own concept of what it should be, and we must all lend imagination to the same task, as well as lend what practical aid we could. The ardent duchess said, soberly enough, that as women's lives have to be passed in fixed conditions the pleasantness of the conditions is therefore of supreme importance, and messer Porrino added cosily that the production of exalted beauty is moreover the test of civilisation: but I suppose most of us recognised unconsciously, or at least silently, that this was going to be another attempt to domesticate ecstasy, and to create a specific atmosphere by using life itself to engender it. The ambition has a mysterious nobility and is perhaps the best witness of human dignity that we possess: it is creation that is more marvellous than that of painter, musician or poet, for the vision in the mind that has to be brought into life has to strive with act and circumstance and can never be the genesis of pure passion. It may well be all a sort of game, for has not Plato said that all art is a game, and that he feared it misled those that sought truth. But the art of creating an ideal world can never seem to me the shadow of a shadow, but rather the activity of heart and sense and soul finding exhilaration in what it

invents and in apprehensions that are godlike. At all events, if it is but a game, it is one at which woman alone excels, and the women who succeed are queens. They dwell at the centre of the habitation they have made out of the winds of the spirit, ceaselessly insuring that wholeness which is sacramental and perhaps too ultimate for actual happiness. Men draw near, and the majority notice it all but dimly, although they are affected by it. The rare man alone is enchanted: he has found a new country, and he stays there, because he discovers in it something necessary for him.

All this was as a ferment in my mind while the palazzo and the garden grew in outward splendour. Masons, carpenters, upholsterers and gardeners were in no hurry to finish their tasks, but at length order began to emerge, and quietude to seem again a possibility: and then I had to ask myself if means had not after all substituted themselves for ends, and if what ought to please had not expelled that which actually pleases. Beauty should ravish pervasively, and always retain a fringe of suggestion, and as I stood by a window in the principal chamber and looked at the green, onyx floor which had been laid down there, at the marble caryatides which upheld the carved hood of the chimney, at the black velvet curtains woven with a pattern of gold acorns which hung over the doors, at the gilded stools, and the ebony cabinet with its engraved panels, I wondered exactly what it was that involves charm, and why I felt it was not here. And, out in the garden, a milk-white peacock, which had been brought from Naples, strutted on the steps of the new pavilion and screamed acquiescence.

The lady Isabella was of very fitful temper during all the autumn months, for her separation from her lord, and the desultory news she had of him from time to time, would have tried robust health and a more disciplined nature. The lady Giulia had often to exercise a difficult patience, but in the last days of November the lord Luigi came clattering to us, and on the 6th day of December (1531) an heir was born, and there was a great ceremony made of the baptism in the little Cathedral when deputations from all the fiefs in the duchy attended. The child was given the names of Vespasiano Colonna.

Until all this was over, and the festivals of Christmas and the Epiphany gone by, the lord Luigi kept from his wife, and from us all, the intelligence that he must leave Fondi again. His Holiness was sending him to Brussels with dispatches for the emperor, and I surmised this not

to be so much perversity on the part of the Holy Father as the lord Luigi's own willingness to be employed in any affair of camps and courts that would add to his reputation. There appeared to be ways newly opening out for all who were ambitious of glory, because, as we had known in Rome, and as we heard anew, the danger from the Turk was a growing one. The sultan Suleyman was making vast preparations not only to advance once more on Vienna in the spring, but for a great attack on the coast of Italy too,<sup>5</sup> and the Pope saw as necessity that the seaboard must be fortified in many places, and that aid must be given to the emperor's brother, king Ferdinand, as well. How to raise money for the Crusade, how to persuade the princes of Europe to come together to support it, how to persuade Venice to declare against the infidel, how to create a fleet to engage the enemy at sea—all this was now the sleepless pre-occupation of his Holiness: while, as the lord Luigi explained to us, every enemy of the emperor (and especially his majesty of France) was affirming that if king Ferdinand was allowed to establish himself in Hungary there would be set up an empire and monarchy of the Hapsburgs far more powerful and dangerous than that of the sultan.<sup>6</sup> It seemed certain that the spring would bring stirring events, and greatness is always a long need in the soul of man. But I reflected as I watched the Gonzaga and his sobbing wife when their hour of parting came, that destiny had so far given him but a subsidiary part to play, and I doubted if it might not, for all his gifts, be so until the end. And so it proved. It was Ippolito who was presently set on high in the sight of all men, and who went forth with a retinue at his heels, and with an immense sum in ducats entrusted to him, and who joined the host under the command of the emperor at Ratisbon in the upper Palatinate.

It had seemed to me during those first months at Fondi that I had done foolishly in not making excuse to bring to an end my position in the duchess of Trajetto's household, for we seemed to be very isolated from Rome, and I could foresee nothing that should bring Ippolito southwards to us. He came sometimes into our conversation, for the lady Giulia not seldom had letters which made mention of him, but no correspondence, such as would have been natural, had grown up between them: and I could invent no reason on my own part for taking up my pen to address him, for I was wary not to impose any strain on the friendship he gaily avowed for me. At length, on a March day in the year of our Lord 1532, a courier, going through to Naples, brought a letter for me.

Honoured and dear lady: What a long forgetfulness of friendship is yours. I get high tidings of an elysium in the kingdom of Naples and can but suppose that it has been decided to shut me out from its felicities. I hear of marvels of taste and beauty induced out of unpromising material, and of halcyon days passed in the midst of it all. The worshipful duchess, reigning in her kingdom of Fondi among her devoted subjects, has of course no thought to give to a poor servant languishing in Rome, but I believed I was certain of the regard of one at least among her retinue. I entertained his lordship, Luigi Gonzaga, to supper when he was lately here on his way to the Netherlands. He was full of vainglory as the father of a son, and if you had no other topic to engage your pen there has always been that of the affabilities of this heir to the honours of two great families. Thus aggrieved I address you.

This letter which I read aloud to the company after supper made a whole evening's entertainment for us, the one and the other fertile in suggestions concerning the answers to it which I must pen. But I was minded that my reply should be in sober mood, and, although I knew the lady Giulia to be expectant that I would show it to her, I contrived to dispatch it to Rome uncensored. I felt mine honour to be involved in this function of an intermediary, and I never could be clear with myself how I should act. I craved for Ippolito the stability of a noble passion which should purge his life of others less worthy, but the woman such a passion made its object must ultimately be its victim whether she insisted on the sacredness of boundaries or no. It was not easy to give coherence to such a reflection, but I knew the lady Giulia had an ever present awareness of Ippolito's existence in this world, and that, ever since he had knelt before her with her hand in his, her mind had turned to the idea of him with an instinct which I judged to be neither physical nor of the understanding, but just an impulse reaching out to something essential she needed. I foresaw that such a feeling, all unaware of desire, and well-nigh unconscious, might, in some charmed hour, sweep her irresistibly into the arms which would be waiting for her, and I had to ask myself *what then?* A man must insist on a proof of love that will dispel all his misgivings, and a woman cannot admit any such proof without humiliation: what makes the happiness and security of one of the lovers is only shame and danger for the other. Unless there can be unity of destiny—as in marriage—there can be for a woman no spiritual reality: yet denial almost amounts to a desire for death. I felt my pen to be made of lead as I wrote to Ippolito with a laboured simplicity of our daily life at Fondi, believing that a recital of matters purely domestic was the safest course.

I told the Cardinal that the palazzo was not a place of great splendour, and that the lady Giulia, irked with its old-fashioned air and many inconveniences, had even wondered at one moment if she should not rather raze it and build anew: it had not been easy to satisfy the lady Isabella with apartments either for herself or for the all-important heir, I said: and that the lord Luigi's wife now had her own ladies and her own servants, and I thought the lady Giulia was somewhat harassed with disputes over money as well, and I knew that she had sought the counsel of the Cardinal Pompeo Colonna. This one had come from Naples for a brief visit of curiosity and commendation, bringing with him as a gift a copy of his recently published *Apologia Mulierum* which was dedicated to the marchioness of Pescara: the lady Vittoria herself had been with us too, going to her residence at Ischia: so had the lady Costanza d' Avalos<sup>7</sup> travelling in the contrary direction to join her lord at Siena. I was disconcerted, I think, that there was actually so little for narration, and I took refuge finally in panegyric of the spring weather of the south, and in sentiments, proper to woman, concerning the bantling Vespasiano. I own that I was startled when, as soon as might be, a courier from the Cardinal de' Medici brought me another letter, the majordomo who gave it to me saying that the man would be ready to return on the morrow if my answer should be prepared so soon. There was no alternative but to take it to the lady Giulia; and this I did, finding her in the farther garden in the walk where peach trees were nailed against the wall. I made a pretext to withdraw madonna Gabriele, who was with her, away with me to a little distance, and, when we returned, the duchess had the letter folded in her hand and gave it back to me saying quietly that she would command messer Porrino to send an answer, and that the hospitality asked for could not well be refused. She called the gardener to her even as she spoke to me, and it was impossible to aver that what Ippolito had written had moved her in any way.

Honoured friend and dear lady: Your letter with its intelligence of our friends at Fondi reached me on an afternoon when don Juan de Valdès was with me, and all that you say about your Eden on the Appian Way made us ask ourselves if we were to be for ever shut out from it. Both of us have been ailing; he with an ague, I with a severe catarrh, and the weather here in Rome is still harsh and inconstant. We wondered to one another if it might not give us new life, and restore health and spirit, if we were to take horse and ride south for a few days. We wondered if a welcome would await us if we did so. Of this we feel we need assurance: myself especially. It may only be the upshot of an uneasy conscience, but I seem to read between the lines of what



you write with your accustomed felicity of the infant Vespasiano. I do not think I am wrong in supposing that you parade this child born in wedlock because rumour has informed you that I myself am the father of a child too, and one who, like myself, will always bear the stigma of bastard. The rumour is substantial enough. Madama Astrubade has been inconvenient, and I have no reason to disbelieve that the young Annibale is my son. He will henceforth be a factor in my life.

Perhaps all this is the fundamental reason for my longing to turn my back on Rome and all its doings for a brief space, and to find myself in pure and lovely spring sunshine in a haven where virtuous women spend calm days in reasonable occupations. I may seem to write as a charlatan, but Heaven alone knows my weariness of the companionship of the woman who is not virtuous. Pleasure in such society is never pleasure because it never has a quiet mind. The viciousness of the relation is that one is forever condemned to love: there is no time nor demand for anything else: one can never merely exist and be happy. You who have so often been my mentor will say that I have no right to bring my sickness of soul into a seraphic presence. And if that is your decision I must not complain: but I ask for a little understanding. If don Juan and I are allowed to come to Fondi it will be as unpretending travellers we shall arrive, and hoping to be received without punctilio.

It was night-time when they came, at an hour when all were in their beds, and a darkness, that seemed to belong to a titanic past or yet were moon and stars, had blotted out the town and the mountains. I listened from the gallery outside my chamber to the watchman unbarring the gates on to the street, to the clatter of hoofs entering the cortile, to the muffled echo of voices, and presently to the deep silence that once more fell on the palazzo.

The duchess had all her ladies with her next morning to the garden when Ippolito and don Juan, followed by the Cardinal's secretary, messer Cesano, came out to us down the newly built outer stairway from their apartments. It was an April morning, with the almond blossom and the plum blossom as lucid as the plucked and sparkling notes of a lute against the deep blue of the sky; and, with another delirium of blue carpeting the borders at her feet, the lady Giulia stood to receive her guests, all her young slenderness made expressive by her clinging gown of blond brocatello. I had the whim that she swayed in the ether like a plant in the bed of a pool, and I marvelled anew at the grace she accomplished out of nothing and the certainties she conveyed with a casual gesture. She seemed, I know not how, to impose a conviction of the existence of hopes without which no one is called upon to live.

We all sat presently with quiet content at dinner in the pavilion, and tranquil dignity, which even the lady Isabella could not do much to mar, was the measure of the days which followed. The Spanish gentleman in our midst had a fragrant spirit which made the morrow always as blessed as today: I am convinced that he put little value on what was intellectual or simply beautiful, or even perhaps religious, but his serene and silent demand seemed to be for more life—for unity and character and purpose in things. His very laughter seemed to tell of a greater freedom than we could envisage, yet which was somehow a renunciation too: and what in him was generous and exquisite was thus a little formidable. The atmosphere he created is not to be recovered in words, but it was no snare of the imagination.

Ippolito on his part seemed willing enough that time should go by with no unwonted diversions, and he was, as I could perceive, still unwell. He would sit with us sometimes, idly pulling a dog's ears or twisting my embroidery silks into comical devices, but showing no desire to take any lead in discussions grave or gay. I observed the lady Giulia more than once give him a darting glance that seemed to wonder if she really knew what he was like. He was suddenly presented to her as labyrinthic. He had an intent way of looking at her that seemed to be all unconsciousness of her actual presence, and to challenge his dark eyes was to chase what withdrew itself into depths and further depths again: it was impossible not to feel that the thoughts submerged there were perhaps after all inimical. Don Juan had told us that this very month (April 1532) the emperor was going to abolish the Republic of Florence by a decree, and that, after nearly a year of a somewhat anomalous position there, Alessandro was to be made its duke and hereditary ruler. Moreover he talked (and this being a subject that interested himself more nearly) of all the danger from the Turk by sea here in Italy and by land beyond the Alps, the emperor being already at Ratisbon and in command of armies from the states of Germany that were assembling there. His Holiness, said don Juan, realised that help from himself should be forthcoming and was indeed imperative, and Ippolito had set his whole soul on playing a leading part in the coming campaign.

The lady Giulia's imagination was of necessity awakened at this, but pride sagged when she found that she could not get Ippolito himself to talk about it at all, and that he would not discuss the matter of Florence with her either. He was equally uncommunicative to me, only saying of Florence that Alessandro's certain end would be assassination. But I found him ready with gossip about society in Rome, and he told me

among other news that the lord Filippo Strozzi had long been trying to extract a promise of the red hat for his son Leone who had now left the university of Padua. His Holiness had been resolute in refusal, and Leone himself, too young to adopt a counsel of patience, had demonstrated his independence and was now in the island of Malta where he was to be elected a knight of S. Giovanni.<sup>8</sup>

The lady Isabella was ever ready to suggest riding with Ippolito here and there, and he would play battledore and shuttlecock with her endlessly and pick her with sardonic patience out of the bushes into which she wantonly tripped and tumbled. No man ever felt a need to be over punctilious in her company, but he maintained a pose of inexpressiveness which was a visible provocation to her. A curiosity about the Cardinal de' Medici and the duchess of Trajetto had been born in her in Rome, and I, knowing how powerless rectitude is in this world when an envious woman laughs, always paid a prudent heed to her banter. Ippolito however took opportunity to counter it directly, and this, one afternoon, when it began to rain, and he and the lady Isabella came within and found many of us gathered together around the table in the chamber with the onyx floor, and don Juan reading to us aloud from the *Æneid*. Don Juan laid down the volume, and Ippolito, standing there, reached across for it, saying that Virgil when he was dying had asked his two friends to destroy the poem and he had undoubtedly been right. No one was quite ready to take up this challenge, but messer Porrino felt he must do his own reputation justice as a poet and a scholar, and he presently voiced a good deal that was both juridical and enthusiastic, saying that the *Æneid* was of course an imitative epic reminiscent of Homer, its text imperfect, and its poetic value damaged because the interest is not centred on *Æneas* himself but on a city and nation yet unborn. Nevertheless, he pursued pedantically, this picture of the majesty of the past and the splendours of the future casts its spell over us because of the sense of the mystery of this world and of human life that is woven into it. We have, as warp, suffering, impotence, disaster of spirit, comfortless sorrow: as woof, unquenchable craving, the endlessness of effort, and, for some few perhaps, the hope of a farther shore: here is all the wonder of the mysterious providence which appoints that, what we desire life to be, has no bearing on what life is, and that, only in wrestling with what he can never achieve, can man accomplish sovereign good.

I feel sure it was merely to give the matter a lighter twist that the lady Giulia hereon exclaimed that she had often wished some scholar would render the *Æneid* into the Italian tongue; and, when Ippolito looked

away to her from the pages he was turning over, she threw at him the laughing petition that he would do it himself. All clapped their hands, and somewhat to my surprise he did not make any disclaimer, only saying that he had poor scholarship and little diligence, and the epic was very long, but that it would perhaps not be so rash if he undertook to see what he could make of the second of the books which contained the story of the sack of Troy. Therewith the lady Isabella burst into loud laughter, and when we all looked at her for explanation, she, standing there and leaning her weight on the edge of the table, said derisively that it was clear the lord Cardinal chose this book with the hope that the tale of Troy, as he should present it, would work upon a modern Dido the same spell that the original did on Dido of old. A flush rose in the lady Giulia's cheek and I saw that her anger was deeply stirred. Ippolito himself seemed unruffled, and only his prompt incisiveness proved how much he resented the innuendo. He laid down the volume and placed his palm upon it, and he said unsmiling that if the suggested translation was ever to be accomplished by himself it was clear that it would have to bear a dedication which should deliver all concerned from the imputations of vulgar minds. The lady Isabella at this put out her tongue, but Ippolito concluded evenly that all would realise that he had chosen Virgil's tale of the burning of Troy because it was recital of a great disaster, and therefore an image of the despair which racked all those who knelt at the shrine of the lady of Fondi.

The lady Giulia was still flushed and not, I saw, entirely mistress of herself when we sat at supper that same evening, and perhaps it was her enhanced loveliness, as well as a desire to further disconcert the lady Isabella, which prompted Ippolito to the petition that he might be allowed to send the Frate del Piombo, the Venetian artist, to Fondi to paint her portrait. Since his Holiness had given this Sebastiano Luciani the office of the Seal, and he had taken a monk's habit and had enjoyed a regular income, he had become very lazy, said Ippolito, but he was still a skilful portrait painter and had lately been engaged on a picture of the lady Caterina de' Medici.<sup>9</sup> The duchess showed no hesitation over her consent as I had half expected she might. She said easily that, if the Frate from Rome came she should command a second portrait from him, as she should like to send it to her grandmother.

When I went to her chamber that evening she was at her prayers in the diminutive oratory which gave out of it. I stood in the chamber looking at the walls hung with a flowered Lucca damask woven with silver sprays and garnished with silver fringes, at the bed with its

coverlet strewn with fragrant sprigs of rosemary, at the satin pillow with a single rose lying on it. I put my hand over my ears and shut my eyes, listening to the echo of footsteps that would never draw nearer.

After the Cardinal and don Juan de Valdès had left us to return to Rome, the summer, which proved to be one of exceptional heat, seems, in memory at least, to have gone by swiftly. In June was the unlooked-for death of the Cardinal Pompeo Colonna in his villa at Chiaja outside Naples. He was borne to Pagliano for burial in the vault below the church, and the ladies Giulia and Isabella and many of the household crossed the mountains and joined the funeral procession. This event troubled the lady Giulia, for her decision to make her residence at Fondi had been in some part due to the fact that she would be under the Cardinal's protection as the emperor's viceroy. She was anxious as to whom the new viceroy might be, but don Juan wrote to say that don Pedro of Toledo, who was to be appointed, was a wise choice.

In the meantime the Frate del Piombo had arrived and had set himself to his task,<sup>10</sup> greatly tried by the torrid weather and his own corpulence, and in July we had the intelligence that Ippolito had left Rome with all the pomp of a papal Legate, and with a great retinue was set out for the far north to join the emperor.<sup>11</sup> The immediate outcome of this for ourselves was that messire Molza, Marcantonio Flaminio (whom I remembered long ago at Urbino), Claudio Tolomei, Francesco Berni and others, wont of late to spend the summer months with Ippolito at Tivoli, all brought their flowery pens to Fondi,<sup>12</sup> and soon several poems of varying merit were produced by these gentlemen on the subject of the lady Giulia's portraits, Gandolfo Porrino holding his own in the contest. With one of her flashes of wit the duchess said to me that few women are modest enough to suffer without pain those who would appreciate them. The invitation extended to these versifying courtiers had been made at the suggestion of messer Porrino who thought, I know, that Fondi was somewhat lacking in the urbanities. And the lady Giulia too had said to me one day that she had been asking herself of late as she watched her ladies in their bright gowns moving among the flower beds or sitting together in the shade, if they were not all too much like marionettes, and if it were enough for youth that time should pass suavely. To this I returned that the great anomaly ever was that the lives of men and women, which are at heart separate, must, if they are lived separately, become drained of vivacity and the graces of

the spirit: I added that, with the advent of messer Molza, we should perhaps become weary of vivacity, but all these gentlemen from the court of the Cardinal de' Medici would at least keep us in closer contact with what was passing in the world: and I never lost sight of this consideration in the somewhat irksome weeks during which summer melted into the magnificence of autumn. Ippolito had left Rome on the eighth day of July and he had reached Ratisbon on the twelfth day of August; and it was towards the end of September that messer Tolomei had letters which told of the journey and of the Legate's splendid entry into this German city. The letters were from the secretary, Gabriele Cesano, and from the lord Battista Colonna, count of San Segundo, who had gone in command of the men-at-arms, and I give what my memory has retained.

The journey, pressed on with needful rest only, was by Siena, Modena, Mantua and Verona, up the valley of the Adige to Bolzena in the country of the Tirol, and out through the mountain passes into the great plain of Europe, and to the fertile lands to the north of the city of München which were watered by the river Danube; and then a camp was made within six miles of Ratisbon that all might shake off the dust of travel and go forward in right array. Messer Cesano sent us presently a newsletter<sup>13</sup> which bore the stamp of Ratisbon, the date of the 16th day of August, and the title of *La Pomposa entrata de l' Illustrismö Card de' Medice alla Corte Cesarea* 1532. And this gave a picture of how it all was, the count of San Segundo being first with horsemen in Burgundian helmets, Ippolito riding next with twenty grooms in scarlet livery, and followed by the Bishop Bernardo de' Medici, the Monsignori, and all the lords and gentlemen; and troopers again for rearguard under the command of the captain Camillo Campagna. So they came to the sight of the walls and towers and bridges of the city, and to the German noblemen, all finely mounted and caparisoned, coming forth to meet them; and at the city gate king Ferdinand himself was waiting with his Eminence the Cardinal of Trent and a great company. The news letter then set forth that the king placed Ippolito on his right hand, riding with him through the streets until they came to that in which stood the palazzo of the marquis of Brandenburg. Here the Papal Legate was to be lodged, and the Cardinal of Trent escorted him up to the door, where the Cardinal Campeggio, who was crippled with gout and had been unable to ride, awaited his coming. On the day following Ippolito went with appropriate state to the emperor's villa outside the walls, the Cardinal Campeggio accompanying the procession in a litter with his

own household in attendance. Arrived at the villa (so it was written) the emperor would have his Eminence Campeggio be seated, but himself remained standing in smiling conversation with Ippolito for a quarter of an hour or more, going with him in person across the cortile when he took his leave and then returning to the elder Cardinal with whom he remained closeted for a considerable space of time. Subsequently Ippolito attended on king Ferdinand, and paid state visits to the two Cardinals as well. It would seem that nothing had been omitted to do the Legate fitting honour, yet I could not gain much assurance that any noble sphere of action was marked out for him, nor that he was more than an ornate gesture made by his Holiness.

These letters that came to Fondi strove, with the ordinary lack of success, to convey in words some picture of the city of Ratisbon itself, speaking of a great bridge of 15 arches which spanned the Danube, of ship-building yards, of a busy trade in commodities with Vienna, of a town hall, a cathedral, ramparts and towers, and all as different from anything to be seen in Italy as well could be. Messer Berni observed that the writers meant well in their zeal for our instruction. That which was more pertinent was what they wrote of the army under the emperor's command now encamped near to Vienna, and that they were given to understand that it was a mighty host of Spanish and Italian veterans under the marquis del Guasto, with regiments of cavalry from the Low Countries and a swarm of irregular troops: Vienna they said was confident behind her new walls, and messer Tolomei observed that soon might be fought one of the great decisive battles of the world. He had a wider outlook on affairs than the other Roman guests, and was fond of dissertation, so that I was soon able to understand something of the imbroglio beyond the Alps, and presently it was not difficult to lead him on to be indiscreet about Ippolito.

He asserted that, notwithstanding a reputation for diplomatic subtlety, there was something innately artless about Pope Clement, and, because it ought to be so, his Holiness had not doubted but that the whole of Christendom would rally to face the danger of the Turk. The sultan Suleyman, said msr Tolomei, was perhaps not so formidable a warrior as his father Selim who had doubled the Turkish dominions,<sup>14</sup> but his ambition to found a universal empire was known to be resolute, and he had limitless resources: the secret agents of his Holiness in Constantinople had reported him to be of a penetrating sagacity, and he had too, of course, his own agents in all the courts of Europe, and must be well informed how little of unity there was for him to reckon with—that the

king of France, for instance, could not be desirous that the frontier of the Turk should be advanced to the Rhine, but that to make this frontier once more the further confines of Hungary meant the exaltation of the Hapsburgs which he liked even less. Meanwhile the princes of Germany had made the Mahomedan danger into their own religious opportunity: their demand for a Council of the Church had become a fetish with them, and they had formed a league at Schmalkeld which repudiated the reconciliation in matters of faith that the emperor believed he had himself affected at Augsburg earlier in the year: the sultan would be well aware that they were resolute not to come into the field without a guarantee concerning the Council. All this had made a great danger for the emperor and king Ferdinand, said messer Tolomei, because they were unable to afford the pay for hired troops on a great scale. The emperor had accordingly summoned a Diet at Ratisbon, where he had been authoritative that the shelving of the Council was entirely due to king Francis and not to his Holiness, and, good Catholic although he was, he had brought himself to make promises which resulted in the Lutherans at last assembling their armies. But I saw, and said so, that these would be no armies fired with the spirit of a holy war, and I wondered aloud, how the Cardinal de' Medici would find himself, and if it would not have been more prudent to send some older member of the Curia as Legate.

To this msr Tolomei made answer that there had been much gossip in Rome, and half a dozen reasons for the Pope's decision had been put forward, some saying that the lady Caterina de' Medici's affection for the Cardinal was inapt, others that it was from the society of ladies more sophisticated that his Holiness would remove him: some declaring that the Holy Father deplored the great mountain of his debts and the whole manner of his existence, and hoped for some real reformation when he was under the military discipline of the emperor.<sup>15</sup> If the Pope indeed hoped for this, it proved how little real apprehension he had of Ippolito's unswerving ambitions and of the mettle of his spirit.

By the month of November the sultan was in retreat through Styria, the emperor had come again into Italy, and Ippolito was in Venice. There was always a veritable conspiracy of silence about it all, but there is little doubt that Ippolito had been twice under the grave displeasure of the emperor; and that he had been in the first place severely arraigned for attempting to take charge of the campaign.<sup>16</sup>



From what I could gain by one means and another it would seem that, shortly after the papal legation arrived in Ratisbon, it was known that the Turks were laying siege to a small town in Hungary called Güns, the which was making a heroic defence. Ippolito found it intolerable that no aid should be sent to its governor, and had only disdain for the reality that the German levies, persuaded with so much difficulty to undertake the defence of Vienna, would in no case advance beyond the frontier. Ippolito, having 50,000 ducats in his possession, had seen (as I envisage it) a great opportunity given into his hand, his spirit had risen to meet it, and, taking advice from no one, he had sent the captain Camillo Campagna ahead of him into Hungary to recruit 10,000 cavalry. He himself left Ratisbon on the 1st day of September, wearing a Hungarian dress of mulberry velvet and a cap with green feathers and carrying a bâton-of-command, just as he was afterwards portrayed by Tiziano Vecelli. Twelve captains and his own men-at-arms went with him, but before they reached Vienna the news met them that Güns had fallen on the 30th day of August after a heroic defence under its governor Nicholas Jurischitsch. The captain Camillo thereon disbanded what of recruits he had gathered; but Ippolito stayed on for some time in Vienna, making a personality of himself there, advising the authorities about their defences, and undertaking a survey of the surrounding country which all anticipated might soon be the scene of bloody strife. Had he been brought up to the profession of arms he could not, it was reported, have displayed more military ability; but although I have my own understanding of the zest with which he found himself playing the part of a man at last, and must smile as the engaging picture of it all rises in my imagination, yet it could not be expected that, either the marquis del Guasto in actual charge of the armies, or the emperor himself, should have indulgence for what to them was extravaganza.

When Ippolito at length made his return journey along the north bank of the Danube, he came to Ratisbon with the intelligence that the Turks were occupying the south bank and had pursued him with their fire. For it would seem that, instead of making Vienna their goal, they had deflected eastwards, had forded the river Ems and were beginning to occupy the territory around the city of Linz, which stood on the river Danube somewhat more than halfway between Ratisbon and Vienna. I can suppose that Ippolito rode into Ratisbon with the dream of Linz about to be invested and himself its destined deliverer. But destiny is always faithful to an appointed pattern, and, instead of action and glory, he was to experience nothing but that treatment of himself

as misguided and negligible which had turned his spirit to blackness before now. The emperor Charles is a man of few words it is said, and those words seldom corrosive, yet as I think of Ippolito standing before Caesar, I recall him as he faced the lady Clarice in the palazzo in the via Larga, his eyes dark and unseeing and death within him.

In the outcome there was to be glory for no one, and the great historic battle which messer Tolomei had dreamed of was never fought. The Turks appeared under the walls of Linz, but the siege was but feebly undertaken and was quickly raised, and to the amazement of all the world, it became known that the sultan had begun a retreat on Belgrade. It is said that the intelligence his agents brought him of the strength of the imperial army had made him uncertain of triumph, and he deemed it imprudent to risk defeat with winter so near at hand and he so far from his own capital. On the other hand any pursuit of his hosts by the emperor would have been a madness, for the Spanish and Italian soldiers being in arrears with their pay would have been as unwilling to advance as the Germans. The emperor had other reasons too for not undertaking a chase that would have led him far afield. France and England, ever ready to assail his position and his dominions, were at this time active in intrigue;<sup>17</sup> while, having pledged himself to forward a Council of the Church, it was necessary for him to have a personal discussion with his Holiness. He went eastwards as far as Vienna, and there he made the decision to return to Spain by way of Italy. He begun the passage of the Alps early in October and Ippolito travelled in his train.

It would be outside experience of him to suppose that the Cardinal de' Medici rode in the wake of the imperial troops in any chastened spirit. Monsignor Carnesecchi was persuaded in the following spring to speak about it all, and it is evident that Ippolito's vigours and aspirations dammed in one direction had, as was usual, at once found outlet in other ways; first of all in disorderliness of life which had been cause of scandal, and then, when the journey was well begun, in the carrying out of a design which, but that the stars ever ruled it otherwise, might not impossibly have succeeded.

He had still in his possession the larger part of the great sum in ducats which he had brought with him from Rome, and he decided with himself that, once he was back on Italian soil, he would use this money to recruit a sufficient body of men-at-arms, and would then make a swift march southwards with them and seize Florence. And, when I exclaimed at this to Mgr Carnesecchi, he said that in many people's judgment, the attempt might well have meant a triumph, for the walls

were still in ruins in many places, the city smouldering with resentment, and the duke Alessandro in ever present danger of assassination.

But what might so easily have meant attainment as easily miscarried. In advance of the emperor's main body as they all came through the mountain passes down into the plain of Friuli, was a small company of Italians under the command of the count San Segundo who had the captain Filippo Tormielli with him. These two had been given by Ippolito enough gold to enable them to raise their number to 1500 as they went along, but they found such zeal to enlist with them, and they had so little prudence, that they were soon faced with the perplexity of over three thousand men whom they could not pay, and who presently began to raid the countryside for provisions. News of this miscarrying being conveyed to Ippolito travelling in the rear of the emperor, he hastened to slip past the imperial column in disguise and to join the two officers in an attempt to suppress what was become a disorderly onslaught on an innocent population; and the emperor himself, quickly informed of all that was happening ahead of him, was swift to act, for, with his recent experience of Ippolito's calibre and audacity, he supposed at once that something untoward was in hand. The marquis del Guasto was accordingly dispatched with a troop which overtook the adventurers on the banks of the river Tagliamento, and there, after several affrays, Ippolito and the Colonna were both captured and were taken to the town of San Vito and placed under guard. Failure is an adequate bitterness and does not need humiliation added to it, and I am persuaded that the circumstances under which the swords of these two were taken from them were of a peculiarly galling nature, for not only did Ippolito for ever maintain an unbroken silence about the whole matter, but the count San Segundo immediately afterwards took service with the king of France: it is certain that their manhood had been affronted in some unforgettable manner.

It was five days later that the emperor himself arrived at San Vito, and Ippolito was set at liberty with what explanations on either side is not known; but Caesar, who must soon traffic with the Pope at Bologna, sent a courier to Rome with apologies for having laid hands under a misapprehension on one so dear to his Holiness.<sup>18</sup> The unexpected letter which I had from Ippolito from Venice told nothing, and I realised that it would be wisest never to display curiosity.

Honoured, long-enduring and dear friend: I am here in Venice, seeking some refreshment for the spirit between the inglorious futilities of the late campaign and the tedious festivities which await me in the course of the next

few months. Bologna has now been decided upon as the city where his Holiness and Caesar will take counsel together and the Pope, who is already on his way there, desires to have me with him. The emperor meanwhile is being entertained in Mantua, and will go to Bologna by way of Ferrara I understand. But I take up my pen with malicious intent only, for it is not of these great ones I would write, but of your old acquaintance Pietro Aretino. You told me once that you had an unwavering hatred for him which dated from the days of your young womanhood in Urbino, that you were certain his end would be a vile one, and that no torture of hell invented by Dante Alighieri would meet his case. He was the companion of my own boyhood during certain summer months at the villa Careggi, so I have never considered your emotion to be misplaced, but if you could see him in Venice you would need all your philosophy. After his banishment from Rome and then from Mantua, he finds himself here in the great palazzo Bollani on the Grand Canal, which he has filled with works of art, and where he lives in the utmost luxury. He certainly seems to be the wealthiest man in Venice, and he keeps a *seraglio* which that of the Sultan himself can scarcely rival. Nobody needs to ask themselves whence these riches come, for all know that there is hardly a personage of any note in all Italy whom he has not despoiled of large sums at one time or another.<sup>19</sup> I myself have not been exempt from the tax, finding it cheaper in the long run to keep his pen quiet. Invective batters itself in vain against such as he, but he has his good-natured aspect and has not been backward in advising me as to the fairest ladies of the city: among them being the renowned Zaffetta<sup>20</sup> who alone is worth a visit to this place of many waters. You will ask yourself how I have the heart to provoke you so greatly, and I wonder at that too.

But I did not, believe me, come to Venice only to seek the society of its courtesans. You know how many of our old Florentine friends are exile here, and the palazzo of Lorenzo Strozzi, which is on the Grand Canal too, is the place where they most frequently gather and talk about a future which may yet be. The good Lorenzo gave a great banquet in my honour last week to which twenty of the most lovely ballerine were invited, and it was a melancholy thing that I had a little fever and the physician would not allow me to be there.

And now I wonder if the gossip has reached you that I have grown a beard? Monsignor Bembo who was here from Padua recently said he wondered what Pope Leo would have thought of it, and how Cardinal Bibbiena would have expressed himself, and that, since the sack, there had been a great laxity in these matters.<sup>21</sup> I only laughed at his particularity, saying that I thought it increased my likeness to my father. Venice, Nov. 13th, 1532.

I would now write briefly of the death of the lord Luigi Gonzaga, which took place before this year (1532) was out. He had returned in

the spring to Italy from his mission in the Netherlands, and, after some time spent in his Mantuan home, he came south to Rome by way of Ferrara, that being a court which now drew to it many who were concerned either with religion or with letters: for the lord Ercole d'Este, son of the duke Alfonso, had married the princess Renée, a daughter of the late king Louis (XII) of France and she already a lodestar for theologians and for poets.<sup>22</sup> This dalliance on the part of her lord discontented the lady Isabella, but the lord Luigi, who was always covetous of fame as a poet, had written a eulogy for the *Orlando Furioso* of the Ferrarese poet messer Ludovico Ariosto, and he was plainly set on its publication as an introduction to the final revision of that immense poem which was now, he told, almost ready for the press.<sup>23</sup> He sent to Fondi, not only a copy of his own composition, but also copies of the verses in which messer Ludovico had celebrated the lady Giulia, the lady Isabella, and the lord Luigi himself; the lady Giulia observing that the prodigality of sentiment was much like sunlight at noon, and no golden mist here such as that contrived for Helen of Troy.

The lady Isabella however was confident that she had been immortalised; and presently her husband came to Rome, and she went to join him there, going presently to Pagliano with her ladies when he was sent by his Holiness in the month of August to persuade Ancona to strengthen its fortifications. For the Turks were again active, and in September as far as Gallipoli with a great fleet, and we heard that the lord Andrea Doria had set sail from Messina, and, presently, that he had swept the infidel from the seas, had captured Coron and Patmos and had ravaged the territory of Corinth. But for the lord Luigi, in the meantime, had been what he felt as ignominy, for, notwithstanding his assurance pledged to Ancona, Monsignor Bernardino dalla Barba came with a great body of papal troops to supersede him there, and to add the town to the possessions of the Church. The lord Luigi returned to Pagliano, and came presently to Fondi for a brief space, he being in no suave mood and inclined to forswear the service of Pope Clement for ever.

But he did not do so, and thus it was that he came ingloriously to his end in November in the town of Vicovaro<sup>24</sup> in the Sabine hills. This was Orsini territory, and the turbulence that had arisen was all among the Orsini themselves. The lord Napoleone Orsini the Abbot of Farfa had been in the service of the king of France of late, and now, returning home full of ill-will against his brothers, he had raised a body of malcontents, and seizing Vicovaro had shut the lord Girolamo Orsini up in

the citadel there. Banditry like this, so close to Rome, needed to be dealt with, and came within the province of the lord Luigi. He had no great difficulty with the defence the lord Napoleone put up, and before very long was able to enter the walls; but the freebooters kept up an intermittent firing as they were chased along the streets, and a shot from an arquebus wounded him in the left shoulder. He was taken to the palazzo Publico, where the wound received attention, and at first there seems to have been little apprehension, but the courier who brought the news to Fondi was quickly followed by another to say that he was dead. The lady Isabella had gone from Pagliano and had been with him at the last, and she presently brought his body to Fondi for burial. The funeral was a great affair of panoply and state, many coming from both Rome and Naples. The lord Luigi had made his will as he lay dying, and he left his wife guardian of their son so long as she remained a widow. With her great inheritance it was unlikely that this would be for long, and before the winter was over Gandolfo Porrino told me that he had it from Bologna that both the Pope and the emperor had candidates for her hand. She meantime was for a while given over to a violence of grief.

The new year (1533) thus began in melancholy fashion, with black draperies billowing on all the stools and benches, and neither music, masque nor dance to enliven the outwardly decorous days. Between Christmas and the Epiphany I made a discovery the which I greatly blamed myself that I had not made before, for madonna Gemma was with child, and when I questioned her in all kindness she resolutely refused to make any confession of the circumstances, only allowing with bitter sobbing that she knew herself to be within but a few weeks of her delivery. I would have kept the matter from the lady Giulia if it had been possible, but I saw that it would be necessary to send the girl away either to Rome or Naples, and therefore I had to bring the tale to her. Her coolness and judgment surprised me, for I had expected of her sensitive spirit a shrinking and a repugnance, but she told me presently that, when she was with her grandmother at Gazzuolo two years before, the lady Antonia had questioned her about her discipline of her ladies, and had advised her never to allow her serenity to be too deeply stirred by such accidents which were ever beyond control however wise. This poise was hard of maintenance as I could see, when the lady Isabella, from whom it was not possible to keep the matter, began to make it a

subject for jest and speculation, and broadcast her confident opinion that the wherefore of the scandal was the Cardinal de' Medici: lively discussions on this thesis did much to restore the buoyancy of the lord Luigi's widow.

It was not altogether impossible that her shaft had hit the mark. When I recalled all the events of those spring days and Ippolito in Fondi I could not repudiate it as entirely impossible. I had returned a reply to his letter to me from Venice giving to him all the particulars of the lord Luigi's death and funeral, and he had written in feeling terms to the widow, and to the sister also. He was then in Bologna, where the Pope and the emperor had both arrived early in December, and presently letters which spoke of him began to come to the lady Giulia and to mrs Porrino. He was installed in the palazzo in which he had lived at the time of the coronation, and was again maintaining his prestige by a show of state. And it was evident that he was maintaining his position with his Holiness as well, for, together with the lords Jacopo Salviati and Francesco Guicciardini, he was conducting an affair of policy with the imperial delegates.<sup>25</sup> How he stood with the emperor himself was told by don Juan de Valdès in a letter to the lady Giulia.

Don Juan wrote in grief. He said that he had begged to be of the papal company to Bologna confidently expecting to see his brother Alfonso there: the two were twins I knew, and so like to one another in person, manner and speech, it was said, that few could tell them apart. Don Alfonso was a chief secretary to the emperor, and had been with him all this time in Germany, but he had died in Vienna of the plague just before the emperor's return to Italy,<sup>26</sup> and it was this sorrowful news which don Juan had travelled far to meet. He was evidently full of sadness, feeling his loneliness and his exile; for messer Porrino told us he could never with safety return to Spain because his work *Diálogo de Mercurio y Caron* had compromised him with the Holy Office there. Don Juan wrote that he had met with much sympathy from all, and the Cardinal de' Medici, beyond others, had made him feel how poor a thing this life would be without its friendships: it was in Ippolito's company, and under the roof of the lady Veronica Gambara, that he had received the condolences of the emperor.

I would that I had made a copy of his letter for he had great skill in writing, giving much detail and making all very lucid. He told that he had found the Cardinal altered, and not only by the beard he had grown, and which he himself deplored. It seemed to him that Ippolito had on a sudden sprung to a maturity, but it was clear that he did not mean by

this the splendour of the prime of life when man is conscious of a share in great enterprises and looks forward to noble achievement. The picture he drew, perhaps unconsciously, was of one who has at last begun to live because he sees the pattern of existence for himself to be unmistakably imperfect, and accepts this decision of the stars with a satirical composure akin to pride: for what proud man does not feel the fascination of fatality, and temptation to protest against it strengthened by the certainty that his intellect will not be deceived. Don Juan said that Ippolito was not sombre, and his zest for all that appertained to the art of living was undiminished, but his wit was unsmiling and had become rather cruel, and the ups and downs of temperament, the alternations of appetite and satiety, laughter and melancholy reflection, earthly jesting and spiritual ardour were never now occurrent, and even the afflatus of the winecup did not bring back what was perhaps irrecoverable. The lady Veronica Gambarà, alone of all the world, seemed to have the power of lending the Cardinal's spirit temporary wings again; and it was plain to me that in the quiet company of this elderly widow, who, even in youth, was, they say, far from beautiful, the men she admitted to her intimacy became conscious, unknown to themselves, of that which woman can give to man—of the delirium of the secret of life. She was a deep and very wise lady, said don Juan, and it was a matter of no wonder that the emperor valued her friendship.

Whether it was the lady Veronica's initiative which brought the emperor and Ippolito to tacit forgiveness of one another, I suppose don Juan did not know. He related that Ippolito and himself had been bidden to a quiet supper at the palazzo Massilia with no warning that they would meet his imperial highness, that they were received with abbreviated ceremony, and were led through the dimly lighted state chambers to the lady Veronica's own apartment. Here, in a small room with a lofty and decorated ceiling, they found a supper table laid and their hostess and Caesar standing by the fire. I could not but feel how alive don Juan made the emperor seem when he told how he took Ippolito by the hand, and, laying the other on his shoulder, said in the French tongue that he never saw the lord de' Medici afresh without thinking that nowhere does the plant man flourish so gladly as on Italian soil—this with his slight stammer, and a smiling tilting of his long chin: then turning with grave sympathy to don Juan himself and expressing his sense of loss at don Alfonso's death. I have always had the picture of the four sitting around the table that evening glinting at one another in the light of the tapers, and the lady Veronica in her dress of



black velvet holding the occasion firmly together. The talk was of wine and of art, don Juan wrote. The emperor praised the sauvignon they drank, saying that the soil of his own Spain produced no wine so palatable, but maintaining that there was a white wine of his kingdom of Burgundy which excelled all other that he knew, and which had so much body that it could well stand a journey into Italy; he proposed to send a cask to the Cardinal in Rome, saying that he must not hear thanks that were too lavish as it was to be against his own coming there which he hoped would not be too long delayed. Then speech turned to the subject of the Venetian, Tiziano Vecelli, who had arrived in Bologna to paint the emperor's portrait. It would seem that the emperor had admired this artist's work in Mantua, where his portrait of the duke Alfonso was hanging in the same cabinet as that portrait of Pope Leo (said to be) by Raffaello Sanzi. Ippolito related in his turn that he had visited the painter's studio in Venice, and, learning there of the commission with which Vecelli had been honoured, had enjoined him that there must certainly be two pictures, for one of them must immortalise his imperial highness in the saddle. The emperor shook his head at this, doubting if one not a horseman would make a success of man and horse in unison; and then he threw across the table that Ippolito himself should be painted while yet young, and, turning to the lady Veronica, he said that he should leave it to her to persuade the Cardinal, and to see to it that he wore the Hungarian dress which had become him so well in Ratisbon. I recalled that Ippolito had once written to me that with a word he could become the emperor's servant: and I wondered if that word had now been spoken.

From m<sup>sr</sup> Molza, who, together with all our guests of the previous summer, was now in Bologna, came a letter a little later on. He spoke first of don Juan, saying that if he had been a better Latin scholar he might have replaced his brother with the emperor; and then he told that Bologna was very thronged with notabilities and the price of everything very high. The dukes of Ferrara, Mantua and Florence were all there he said, and had ridden next behind the emperor on his entry. The duke of Florence was little seen except on the occasions when he must attend his future father-in-law, but he had his own diversions in company with his two intimates, the one Lorenzino de' Medici, a moon-faced fellow, and the other Giuliano Salviati, a rapscallion son of the lord Jacopo. The Cardinal de' Medici was never known to speak to his kinsman, and carried himself as if the lord Alessandro did not exist. In the brilliant vortex of statesmen and ecclesiastics, ladies great and

reputable and ladies who were frail, his Eminence, wrote m<sup>sr</sup> Molza, had always a place that was peculiarly his own, and it were hard to say if those who found his arrogance insupportable were outnumbered by those who loved him for his nobility. Time would be his champion, he penned in lyric mood, unless indeed the lord Ippolito were doomed to some envious reversal at the hands of the gods. The Cardinal was greatly occupied with affairs, for his Holiness made every opportunity to give him importance, and, moreover, two or three times a week there was a hunting party made up; nevertheless he was finding time to carry out his promise made at Fondi, and the translation of Virgil was now proceeding apace. Besides all this he was giving sittings to Tiziano Vecelli. One portrait had been completed, but the lady Veronica Gambarà had declared it to be far too disdainful of humanity, and would have the painter begin another, the lord Cardinal choosing this time to be portrayed in a very finely chased suit of armour he possessed.<sup>27</sup> The Cardinal had made m<sup>sr</sup> Tiziano promise to come to him in Rome, saying that so great an artist must needs paint the most beautiful princess in Europe, and that Sebastiano del Piombo had proved quite unworthy of that task.<sup>28</sup> The writer concluded with the statement that the negotiations going forward about the Council of the Church which the emperor had promised to the princes of Germany were of necessity not easy to bring to a conclusion, and he allowed himself to wonder if with so many interests to be considered, a conclusion would be reached. At the beginning of March he arrived back in Fondi in person bearing with him the translation of the second book of the *Æneid*, beautifully engrossed by a scrivener.<sup>29</sup> He brought letters also for the lady Giulia from Mgr Carnesecchi, don Juan and others; and to myself a letter from Ippolito, and another from Mgr Bembo which he said had come to him from Padua to be delivered to me.

Ippolito's Dedication of his translation of the siege of Troy carried out his previously declared intention in a decisive fashion.

Illustrious lady: The example of a yet more poignant misfortune may sometimes bring mitigation to one who grieves, and, as remedy for sorrow, I have therefore turned my mind to the burning of Troy. But, weighing that disaster against mine, I am become certain that what befell within those walls was not so great a catastrophe as that which I must endure in my heart, and while I have lamented the woes of Troy mine own have been but more

clearly revealed to me. Therefore I send you this, as a true image of the despair which sighs and tears could but feebly represent.<sup>30</sup>

The lady Giulia made no comment on this, nor did she do more than listen with an air of disassociation when Francesco Molza and Gandolfo Porrino discussed in her presence the merits of the translation. It was impossible to show her the letter Pietro Bembo had written to me. The letter has the date of the 3rd day of March in this year of 1533.

It has reached me here in Padua that the emperor has now left Bologna for Corregio to be with the lady Veronica Gambara for a few days on his way to Genoa and to Spain, that his Holiness will shortly return to Rome by way of Ancona and Loretto, and that the Cardinal Ippolito goes with him. What I would come to, is, that I hear most of the Cardinal's retinue will go straight south to Rome, and that Francesco Molza will proceed at once to Fondi to carry to the lady duchess there the translation of Virgil which has engrossed the Cardinal's leisure hours this winter. I have seen a portion of the work, for the lady Veronica has sent me a sample of a dozen lines or so. You and I have an affection for this Ippolito which has its roots in our younger, and more brilliant days, and now he has won the affection of another of my oldest and dearest friends, and I must transcribe for you what she says about him.

She writes to me that he has come to her now and again to read his rendering of the *Æneid*, and always in cynical despair that his translation fails in everything that makes the original great poetry: but she has ever been industrious in comment and has encouraged him to persist, because he has an intellect which he neglects and a task such as this will help to keep alive in him an interest in things of the mind. Moreover, the fact that he is seriously engaged in a scholarly enterprise, gives him a better standing with men of worth, and above all with the emperor, who, although no scholar himself, puts a real value on learning: she considers that the Cardinal is not unappreciative of this aspect of the matter. She adds that of course there are those in Bologna who busy themselves in saying that it is Francesco Molza who is doing all the work.

The lady Veronica's acute worldly wisdom is equalled by an imagination which has always made her sympathy one of the great experiences of life, and she goes on to say that, as Ippolito sits with her, reading out his periods and jesting over them, she can but compare him in her mind with *Æneas* himself as we find him at the end of the epic; for here is one who like *Æneas* has no home, and no personal happiness to which he can look forward, who has done with all the gladness of youth, who is given responsibilities which do not interest him, and has no ambition which it is in his power to realise; who is surrounded with associates, but has no one with whom he can share his soul. And I, who met the lord Ippolito lately in Venice, cannot but realise that he made this very impression on me, although I did not seek to put it into words for myself.

The lady Veronica goes on to question me about the lady Giulia Gonzaga, knowing that I saw her in Rome before her marriage to the Colonna. She gives it as her own conclusion that here is a beautiful woman who has created a life of enthusiasm and thought, but who has failed to compel men to the happiness necessary to them; and she feels it would be interesting to know why. The door of heaven, she observes, can be opened only from within. She sends me a copy of the Cardinal's Dedication to the illustrious lady at Fondi and could wish, she says, that the flame on the altar of passion had not gone out in the smoke of this pedantry. But she thinks it inevitable that it should have done so sooner or later and somehow, for she judges Ippolito to be now incapable of any lasting attachment because capacity for strong affection is always weakened when life's centre is altered by constant excitement: and I would add to this on my own part that hurry and turmoil can indeed prevent life from having any centre at all. The lady Veronica continues that the soul may ask indignantly if love is so poor a thing that it withers in the winds of the world; but that these winds, and especially if they are those of misfortune, distract the imagination to other things, and so ensues a dissipation of heart and mind. Perhaps leisure is really the first requisite of great love, she says, and life insures that a man shall seldom have that. The woman sitting with her embroidery, only has her hands occupied: the man is at odds with affairs when the slightest miscalculation may mean destruction. She concludes that she knows these sentiments to be revolutionary, and prudery enthroned and lending a pleased ear to songs of despair will be the accepted convention for a long time yet. She insists on prudery as the worst form of avarice.

Long ago in Florence, Ippolito, improvising on the lute, and then trying to make verse to fit his music, had said to me with farcical ferocity as he ruffled up his hair over his task, that the Devil was keeping tight hold on all the words that had wings. It is of course not singular that no fury of desire can make the astonishment that is poetry, but I had hoped for something more sensitive and more adventurous than the metrical essay which his translation of Virgil proved to be. It is certain that the Sidonian woman would never have taken fire at a narrative so drained of personality. Messer Molza I know found my appreciation sadly lukewarm, and bade me be interested in the fact that Ippolito had seen fit to make some lines incomplete like those in the original; telling me that it can never be disproved if these were planned by Virgil as they stand because of their effectiveness, for we do not know how far Varius and Tucca revised the text. Messer Porrino was no more enthusiastic than I was, his chief objection being that the artificial and continuous inversion of words robbed the Cardinal de' Medici's lines of energy. If messer Molza had indeed had any hand in the affair his vanity cannot have been

flattered. Ippolito himself, in his letter to me, made no mention of the poem at all.

Honoured lady: You are the life-long friend of Caterina as well as of myself, so before I leave Bologna I must tell you that her future is now fixed, and that it has actually come about by the intervention of the emperor. Caesar has never believed that the king of France meant to accept a Medici as his daughter-in-law, and has been convinced that the tale was one put forth by his Holiness to prevent any marriage for Caterina proposed by himself, such as that with the duke of Milan which he has again been pressing for here; he greatly desiring to make sure of Milan. When the Pope objected that he must not affront king Francis, the emperor thought he saw the opportunity to bring the matter to a head and to make bad blood between Rome and France; he therefore urged his Holiness to make a condition that the nuptials must now take place as soon as preparations for them could be completed. The emperor has been completely foiled, for king Francis at once gave the Cardinals Gramont and Tournon powers to ratify the contract, and has fixed on Nice as the place for the ceremony expressing gratification at the prospect of meeting the Holy Father there.

I have written with mine own hand to Caterina, but I think her young mind has long been prepared for this fate, and that the immediate importance it gives her will perhaps enable her to meet it with more composure than I feel when I contemplate it for her. She will have little prestige at the court of France, and her safety and well-being there will depend entirely on the skill with which she can keep the diagonal line. Moreover is it not a universal experience that there is nothing we must not fear either from time or from man?

You will say that when we teach the young to reflect we usually put them in the way of error, and that if this is all I shall be finding to say to my cousin about a brilliant marriage, it were well that I did not see her. Others have reached that conclusion as well, and before I am back to Rome with his Holiness, Caterina will be safely ensconced once more in the convent of the Murate in Florence. This very week I believe she is to start on the journey north with the lady Maria Salviati. Her trousseau will be a fine occupation and excitement for the good nuns in the via Ghibellina, and Florence is to be taxed to pay for it. His Holiness must perforce face the matter of a dowry, and the provision of jewels as well, and he will have to lay aside all thoughts that are of economy for 100,000 ducats is the sum demanded for the dowry. Filippo Strozzi will of course have to raise the money, but I allow myself to wonder what the security is to be.<sup>35</sup> The provinces of Auvergne and Lauraguais go back to France with Caterina, and those who are ill-natured say that the Scotsman, her uncle the duke of Albany, will have difficulty in rendering an account of his stewardship of them. I am returning to Rome without my secretary Gabriele Cesano for the emperor has asked for his services, he being

an accomplished latinist; and I shall not be sorry to have someone at the court of Spain who will advance mine own interests if needs be.

We go from here to Ancona where I anticipate that we shall be lodged splendidly in the palazzo of his Eminence the Cardinal Accolti who has not yet adopted the ascetic mode of life which is become the fashion with so many of the Curia.<sup>32</sup> From there we travel to Loretto, where his Holiness desires to inspect for himself the progress of the work done at the shrine. I always remember that in my boyhood I overheard the Cardinal da Bibbiena say that this affair of Loretto was one of the worst indiscretions of the Papacy<sup>33</sup>: that was at the time Baccio Bandinelli had been sent there. This one has been in Bologna lately and the Holy Father has at length been persuaded to commission him to prepare designs for the tomb of Pope Leo in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva: it is now ten years since the death of his late Holiness and the delay in my opinion a great scandal.

Don Juan de Valdès has resolved to give up his office of chamberlain and to go to Naples. The death of his brother doubles his patrimony, and he means, I think, to acquire a villa on the shores of the bay and to devote himself to study. Knowing the bent of his mind I feel sure his studies will be of a religious nature. You have, I am convinced, a certain wonder that we should be friends; but so it is, and when he leaves Rome for Naples I may go with him. I am now Vice-Chancellor there, this adding to my emoluments if not to my labours.<sup>34</sup> But if we travel south we shall, I expect, make our lodging in the monastery of San Francesco at Itri where I shall have a freedom to shoot the game on the marshes without incommoding the lady duchess by coming and going at hours not always convenient.

Nothing is settled yet about the exact date, nor yet the place, of Caterina's marriage, for the duke of Savoy is already making difficulties about Nice, he fearing to displease the emperor. Marseilles has been mentioned as an alternative, but his Holiness greatly dreads the long voyage, and will I know do what he can to evade going at all. You are likely to hear how it fares with Caterina in Florence sooner than I do, for there will be a conspiracy to keep me in ignorance. Good angels be with you until we meet again. Bologna March 5th 1533.

The lady Giulia went herself to Naples at Easter time, lodging in the convent of Santa Chiara for the festival, and going afterwards to visit the lady Vittoria Colonna at Ischia. I remained by her desire at Fondi with the lady Isabella; but this one was open in her determination not to be checked in any way, and I made no attempt to join her parties to the mountains, to the seashore, and to the barge on the lake. I was content enough to sit by myself in the pavilion in the garden working against time at the bed coverlet for Caterina which I had begun in Rome and

which I feared might not be ready to go with her to France. Then in the month of May the lady Giulia returned to us in order to receive the lady Margherita, bastard daughter of the emperor, who was making her progress through Italy to Naples to remain there under the guardianship of the viceroy, don Pedro, until she should be of the age for her marriage to the duke of Florence. The lady Margherita's *gouvernante* and the young Flemish ladies who were in her suite would all have been willing enough to tell of their adventures since they crossed the Alps if the matter of language had not made conversation so laborious. However with the aid of bad Latin and a little halting French we had the story to some extent, and it was clear that every effort had been made to give importance to their entry both into Florence and into Rome. I could not but wonder what this fair-haired and rosy-cheeked girl of twelve years had felt when she saw Alessandro, and if Caterina, who had ridden out to Cafaggiolo to meet her, had been able to refrain from expressing herself about him. I would watch the young girl as she sat at table between the lady Giulia and the lady Isabella, and I saw in her the promise of a great comeliness, the budding of dignity, and the certainty of a sturdy will.

When the echoes of this invasion had died away, the preparations for the lady Isabella's journey to her husband's home in Lombardy, which had long been afoot, were pushed rapidly forward. Her father-in-law, the lord Ludovico Gonzaga, was now altogether retired from the world to a monastery, and I know that the lady Giulia greatly feared for the peace of the lady Antonia, her aged grandmother, now living at Gazzuolo, and who would have no one of authority to support her in withstanding Colonna pretensions. There was no doubt that the lord Luigi's widow had the intention to try to take upon herself the government of the Gonzaga estates in the name of the infant Vespasiano.<sup>35</sup> The child was now two years old and healthy and comely, but, captivating as he was, I felt I should be glad to see him depart with his mother, for she was ever jealous of affection he displayed for others and especially for the lady Giulia: in all things the lady Isabella was of a strange perversity, one of her caprices being (for an instance) to make the Tuesday the fast day for herself and her ladies. She took thirteen ladies with her, and with servants, and pack horses and the men-at-arms, it was a host that trailed through Fondi to the northern gate early on a June day; and all the town out to behold they said. When the clatter of her going had died away an exquisite serenity seemed suddenly to invade the chambers: and I looked down on the garden, which lay below the windows

thronged with the mellow shades of the morning hour, the pavilion touched to gold, the rustling silver spray of the fountain rising and falling again into the green pool: while, on a bench under a leaning magnolia tree, two pages were eating cherries from a piled plate which stood between them.

Our Flemish guests had served to make us aware that, when the emperor Charles came next into Italy from Spain, it was for Naples he would set sail, and that the marriage of the duke of Florence and the lady Margherita would in all likelihood take place there. Our late difficulties of interpretation had made the lady Giulia realise that she would cut but a rustic figure at the imperial court if she had no command of Spanish, and her desire being made known to the Reverend Prior of the Dominican convent in Fondi,<sup>36</sup> he had sent to us a Frate whom he said was competent to be our tutor in that language. So it came to pass that, in the quiet days after the lady Isabella's going, and in the cool of the morning hour after Mass, all the younger ladies would be gathered with the duchess around the marble table in the pavilion, their wills set on some proficiency in this strange tongue: for not the giddiest among them but desired to hold her own at the imperial court when the hour came. I often watched them all with a smile as they sat poised there in their pale dresses, their countenances set with the unwonted effort, and the duchess on the teacher's right hand seeking to give him the assurance which he rather grievously lacked.

It was on this scene that Ippolito and don Juan came one morning, they having passed through Fondi for the monastery at Itri the night before. The lady Giulia would have them brought to the pavilion when they were announced, and don Juan entered at once into the spirit of the occasion, seating himself at the table and saying that he himself was writing a treatise on his native language which he hoped to complete when he was settled in Naples.<sup>37</sup> He took the lesson into his own hands, bringing animation into it, while the Cardinal de' Medici, with the beard which I saw did enhance his likeness to his father, stood leaning against a pillar with his unsmiling eyes on the lady Giulia's face. It was consciousness of his gaze which made her shortly rise and scatter the company, and she led the way down the steps of the pavilion. She was wearing a dress of unbleached linen sprigged with black, and her hair was braided closely around the head which she carried so proudly. She was now twenty years of age and had grown a little in stature since the days at



Pagliano. Her figure was beginning to lose its girlish contours, but no look of maturity had come to her, and I reflected that perhaps it never would, and that she might enter some day on the large deliverance of age without consciousness of a meridian passed or any loss of the saving sense of mystery. She had at will both fire and wit, and the gift of laughter was hers, but it was the gravity of her beauty that gave her individuality and exclusiveness and roused imaginative activity. It might be that the gravity was only the potent defence against contacts that displeased her; or it might be that it was the guardian of an inner radiance of the love, tender and terrible, that only waits for the hour when it must give itself up. But how is it possible to put into words what the word *glamour* means; I can get no nearer to the effect she produced than by saying that it was as if the whole performance we call life had been given for her. And I came to the surety that the dark will of Ippolito was now set on proving to her that this was not so.

The two gentlemen were with us scarcely an hour, refusing to remain to dinner as they had invited the Reverend Prior at Itri to dine with them; Ippolito saying that the cook he had brought from Rome was a fat fellow whom the journey had tried sorely, and he hoped the meal would be a more seemly one than the supper prepared on their arrival. They were to leave Itri late that afternoon, and Ippolito proposed to remain in Naples for several weeks.

A month later a horseman brought a missive one morning to say that he was back in the monastery at Itri and would wait on the duchess at supper time if she would allow it: and the heat being too great to make the pavilion or the rooms that looked on to the garden endurable, the supper table was set out in the courtyard loggia, the lord Bishop being invited to join us from his palazzo close by beyond the Cathedral. As he and the lady Giulia and myself sat awaiting the other guest, he was not without innuendo about this Cardinal who was no priest, and I saw his eyebrows go up when Ippolito arrived at last, borne into the cortile below in a litter, and saying to us, as he came up the steps, immaculate in hose and open doublet of emerald green, that a ride of four miles along the unsheltered and dusty highway would have made him unfit to appear in the presence of ladies.

As he sat at table with us I feel sure that he made the others feel as obsolete and as out of the world as I did; for he could not reply to our inevitable questioning without making the talk of sultans and emperors and of all the important events and negotiations in which he had lately played a part. Moreover we learnt that he was shortly to extend his

travels to France, he telling us that Marseilles was now decided on as the place for Caterina's marriage and that the Christian king had made a proviso that he himself was to be included in the papal retinue.

At this point I recall that Monsignor Giacomo Pellegrini tried to direct the conversation into his own keeping, making enquiry as to how it now stood between Pope and emperor concerning the Council of the Church, and proceeding, with some show of learning, to deplore the heretical atmosphere beyond the Alps, and the seeds of heresy which had been blown across them into Italy and which had found soil here and there in which to take root. We did not make the Church, he pronounced, and we may not unmake it: it is a Divine Ordinance and to question its authority on matters of doctrine is mortal sin. And, as I contemplated him, I could not but reflect how in mine own lifetime I had seen the temper of Holy Church in Italy become both sullen and suspicious: there was little here of the spirit in which all such questions had been debated at Urbino when I was young, when I had heard it said without censure that nature is beautiful and man good, and that truth lived in the soul and existed before the Church or Councils and stood outside them both.<sup>38</sup> It seemed to me, in any case, far too hot an evening to introduce a weighty subject such as this, and when his Excellency arrived solemnly at the word *Predestination*, Ippolito stifled a groan which was quite audible to me. It was of no advantage to him however to be at odds with the lord Bishop, and I feel too that he was not unwilling to prove his mettle on this field under the observation of the lady Giulia; and presently, as I listened to his rhetoric, I realised that he had come to a greater maturity of mind as well as of appearance, and I wondered with a sudden leap of the heart if it were possible that, notwithstanding all, he might yet attain one day to nobility of life.

He began his disquisition with laughter, saying he felt sure his lordship was amused as he himself that the disputants in this controversy claimed the same authorities, and that both sides relied on S. Agostino and S. Tommaso d' Aquino to prove their case for them. The lady Giulia asked instantly how this might be, and Ippolito turning towards her was thus able to give his discourse the air of instruction for the female mind. It was well known, he said, that the holy S. Agostino had used the words *God has created me freedom of choice and if I sin it is I who am guilty*. But the Lutherans claimed that S. Agostino, in the treatise he wrote to oppose the theories of the Englishman Pelagius,<sup>39</sup> had definitely taught that Adam alone had liberty not to sin, all the human race since the fall being in bondage to sin and in a state of corruption which could

not be remedied by good works: God alone could restore, and had sent our Lord Christ for our redemption: and Luther's text, built upon this, was, that through faith in Christ all believers are justified, no matter who they may be. So much for one saintly theologian—and Ippolito took a deep draught and set down his empty goblet with a smile. Now for the other—he pursued. S. Tommaso had written that *man is free to decide what is good according to the dictates of his reason*: yet the would-be reformers put forward that he undeniably held the view that the highest places in the Kingdom of Heaven had been set apart for the elect, and the lower for the reprobate, and that God before the world was created had decided the exact fate of every man.

The lord Bishop interrupted at this point that the lady Giulia would well understand the anxiety of all the Faithful to see these matters pronounced on, once for all, by a Council, and to have these heresies denounced; but Ippolito said lightly as he peeled a peach that he doubted if all the Councils in the world would ever completely get round the difficulty, the which was, after all, far older than the Church; for were not the writings of the Hebrew prophets full of it, and had not both Plato and Aristotle discussed it unabatedly and neither able to furnish an answer. The only man within his knowledge who had established a satisfactory relationship between grace and merit was Dante Alighieri, and that mainly by a play on words; and he quoted forthwith, more or less correctly, *Voi che vivete ogni cagion recate pur suso al cielo*, and the stanzas which follow it in the 16th Canto of the PURGATORIO. I did not feel for myself that the good Dante helped much to extricate the conversation from the morass in which it had floundered, and all were perhaps relieved when the lady Giulia wondered lightly what don Juan de Valdès thought about it all. Ippolito replied to this that he doubted if the Spaniard ever thought about it at all, for he was no theologian and the life of the soul for him meant much more than any theories about it: or, if he had a theory, it would be that only through self-discipline and self-abnegation can men receive divine illumination and thus conform to the image of God in which they are made. Here was a spirit entirely original in every manner of thinking and hearing and seeing, said Ippolito; and he thought God must have created don Juan in a fit of absent-mindedness, for his detachment from the world was entirely natural and neither intentional nor systematic. He had secured for himself a villa on the wooded slopes of the bay of Naples at Chiaja and no fairer spot could well be imagined; but we were not to suppose that there was to be any deliberate withdrawal from human

society, for don Juan had taken on himself the office of governor of the hospital for incurables called San Jacomo, and there was also some talk of his becoming a secretary to the viceroy.

The pale moon was now risen over the roofs of the palazzo, the crimson and green were fading from the western sky, and it was so much cooler that the lady Giulia suggested that we should go through the chambers to the garden. The music of mandolins and singing voices sounded plaintively as we came through the doorway on to the stairway that led down to the parterres, and we saw that all the ladies of the household, together with Ippolito's gentlemen, the lord Bishop's chaplain, and others were gathered in the pavilion. I joined the company there, leaving the duchess seated on a marble bench under the wall of the palazzo between his Eminence the Cardinal in his green jerkin and hose, and his Excellency the lord Bishop in his purple soutane. And presently, under the burning globe of the moon now high in a firmament of dark sapphire, the guests took a ceremonious leave.

And this was the decorous prelude to a fortnight of time when the glowing days and moon-flooded evenings lent their aid to the bitter farce of being themselves which Ippolito and the lady Giulia were to play out, and which ended inevitably, as I think, in their becoming mere blurs on each other's vision.

What Ippolito now had to offer in the ripeness of his manhood might well have seemed the very flower of love, intellectual, gay, perfect in its detail, and transcendently passionate. Yet working in him all the time was something far older than this woman's face, something fundamental that was a perpetual gnawing want in his mind spreading outwards and seizing upon his senses. The instinct that, from the moment of first beholding her, had flung him at Giulia Gonzaga, that had ever driven him to the longing to possess her, and had once made the dream of her seem indispensable to existence—all that, I was convinced, was to-day only the ransom paid by his body to his soul, which, thwarted of its natural ambition to inherit the earth, and grieving perpetually over a blackened prospect, turned, with desperate knowledge of its incompatibility, to fathomless craving which should bring all the torment of exultation and yet contrive to seem predestined, bare, and irrelevant.

I had allowed myself in many a brooding hour to decide that the material barriers which prevented this man and this woman from being together for always before all men, were of the devil; and that the

inequitable testament of the lord Vespasiano Colonna was as unsanctified as the evil bestowal of the red hat by Pope Clement. I had arrived at saying to myself now and again, as I drew a needle in and out, that it is not the Church, nor the world, nor the family, nor even love itself that makes a real marriage: it is consent: it is the woman coming to be beside her husband: it is the choice of the straightforward ways of God. But what of any of the ways of God was here between these two in Fondi? In Ippolito himself I was compelled to discern behind all the glamour of his courtesies the very same spirit that will storm a city and make it captive, batten on it and plunder its dead. And in the lady Giulia I was only too conscious of the need for a consummation, which, after its own manner, was to be as insolent as his own.

To make a paradise for him was a desire come at last to its mooring place in her life through the cloudy passage of time. She wanted his happiness. She was all perfect awareness of him, and with high courage and the whole authenticity of her being she wanted to give him much more than he hungered for. She wanted in reality to give him not herself, not the creature God had made, but the creature that was herself no more—the woman of her own devising, the image that she had fashioned with exalted seriousness out of the child of light whom the angels had once smiled to look on. It would have astonished her greatly to be told that here was actually only an idol of the flesh, something wholly within limits and that was not great enough for a man's soul; something that must be unmade and made all over again if it was to bring salvation to a lover. For, in her fantastic ignorance she was planning to give him after all nothing but pleasure.

And so these two stood, the one over against the other, with the dark stream of travesty at their feet between them. Not with impunity could they linger on its bank, and how to save them from undoing seemed beyond wit as the August days came and went, each one bringing Ippolito from Itri with some adroit proposal designed to further the illusion that every other form of existence had been laid to rest.

It all seems an incoherence when trying to see it as a whole, but there are specific remembrances, clear cut as cameos, which have always contrived to persist; and the most durable of them all, perhaps, is the evening when we sat at supper on a stretch of seashore which Ippolito had made his own discovery. A vineyard ripe for stripping was on one side of it, and on the other was the strangeness of the ocean with its limitless horizon of shining gold, and its little wan waves fawning at our feet on the sleek, buff surface of the sand. Gold cups out of Persia stood

on the table, the bread there for breaking was golden too, and so were the seeds of the melons and the honey and the wine: and between her breasts the lady Giulia had a brooch of topazes which matched the transparent gauze it held together. Overhead was a canopy of interlaced branches supported on coloured poles, underfoot were carpets, and on every side was the noiseless beat of the universe and the on-coming of the night: something was stirring out of nothingness and hung suspended, and I was all perception of two faces that were very pale and yet had a singular brilliance. And then, on a sudden, in panther-like silence, a company of Egyptians had seated themselves in a half circle on the sand at a little distance, and they swung a little from their hips and sang softly to the sound of their zithers in a strange tongue. And while this incredible music lasted Ippolito and the lady Giulia were with certainty together in spirit, so that I marvelled he should soon dismiss the chaunters with a gesture; they vanishing among the vines as furtively as they had come. The sun had now gone down behind the sea, and the lady Giulia left the table and walked at the water's edge, turning presently to point to Ippolito the evening star in shining glory in mid-heaven. I heard him say at her shoulder in a bitter undertone that a star that is never reached is of little good to anyone. And that night I knew that she wept on her pillows: for, ever since a lewd jest the lady Isabella had flung a year ago, I had occupied the bed-chamber next her own.

Ippolito himself spent that night in the keep of Fondi at the invitation of the captain Perino Riccacalti, they two up at dawn to test the efficacy of a newly invented firearm for fowling.<sup>40</sup> We ate for supper that same evening the snipe they brought back as an offering, Ippolito keeping the talk remote from all the world of women, and telling, with no little skill in words, of the mysterious heart of the swamp, so fructifying and clamorous with a life that was muffled and withdrawn: of the warm smell of the grasses and the water-weeds, and the birds stirring and calling in the still, chill shadow of the morning. And it may have been a desire to prove herself goddess at the up-rising no less than at the going-down of the sun that caused the lady Giulia to command a hawking party, so that on a morning not a week later we found ourselves on horseback among the mountains almost before the glow that heralded the sun had reddened the limestone. The duchess, ahead of us all, seemed to me as if exultant on the courses of the dawn leading on the golden hours, and Ippolito rode at her bridle. Her easy horsemanship was always to me part of her marvel, and her ardour and her sureness made her an amazement when she was in the saddle. The hawk on her wrist

was but a dispensation to ride on and on, and the rest of us were beginning to flag in the growing heat when the two ahead turned on us with the gay decision that we were now nearer to Itri than to Fondi and that we would reach it before the sun became intolerable. We steered our animals down the rocky path to the little river and the bridge of Itri, where the lady Giulia was decisive that we women would climb at once up the precipitous way between the houses to the convent that lay within the castle's ruined barbican, and which had once, in the same way as at Fondi, been the feudal dwelling connected with the keep by a bridge. Here the Reverend Mother and the Sisters of the Benedettine<sup>41</sup> received us with twittering exclamations, embarrassed of course at being called on a sudden to supply so many wants: but by afternoon we had dined (in some sort) and had slept, and refreshed and newly trussed, we made our way down again on foot, between the curious population all out at windows and doors, to redeem a promise to take our supper in the guest-house of the monastery of the Osservanti. This was at the bottom of the hill close to the stream,<sup>42</sup> and here we found Ippolito resuscitated too, curled and perfumed, and dressed in white even to his shoes of soft leather. It was difficult to feel as cool as he looked, for the sun had not yet declined behind the conical heights and it was very sultry at the bottom of the valley. He had maligned his cook, for the supper set before us was an excellent one, and we were a merry company with the addition of the Reverend Prior and one or two of the Brothers. This monastery had served as a hostel on the road from Rome to Naples for over 200 years and had seen many of the great of the earth come and go leaving the community none the poorer: I marvelled that, this being so, the appointments were not rather better. We left Itri before the daylight had quite gone, litters having been commanded from Fondi to carry the lady Giulia and myself. She gave Ippolito her hand in farewell as she lay on the cushions of the litter, and I who was watching knew that this day of somewhat boisterous well-being had been for them both one of those dateless days which yesterday does not usher in and to-morrow may never drive out.

And so one recollection and another of all that glowing time comes back to me, and, always unfailingly too, the vision of the spinetta in its decorated case which now stood in the great chamber with the onyx floor, and which had been sent by the lord Luigi from Verona in the year before his death. In the shuttered twilight of the mid-day hours the lady Giulia would take her place before its keyboard, her rich gowns, billowing around her, colourless in the obscurity; while Ippolito with

lute, or flute, or sometimes with a viol, would be beside her, and I knew that in the intermittent music they made all the dreams of life had gathered themselves together to be betrayed. She would sit poised as if the whole world had been given into her keeping, a miracle of fragrance and grace, a woman for worship, but a woman who was blind. For her eyes, ever wide and softly shining, saw Ippolito, not as a man but as a symbol, and she was without heed of the reality stirring within him, of the crust of desperation which masked an endless secret strife—despairing moods which had no origin, exultations which were as causeless, and, working through both, the ferment of a remorseless will. She, meanwhile, seemed to exhibit a serene gusto in the contemplation of herself as the eternal star in the eternity of longing they both could share and which could begin forthwith: and this *dies non*, this *never* was to be their paradise. I would wonder at the restraint of the lover beside her, wonder if he would find the conquering word at last. She ever seemed without misgiving, and her low, perfectly pitched voice speaking in the intervals of the music always endorsed her self-possession. But I was certain that his emotional force, bridled as it was, served to increase his fascination for her, and I meditated that an hour might come when she would be unnerved or even frightened. Inhibitions I refused to reason with forbade the longing that the magical thrill of life should sweep her at last on wings into his arms.

And then there came a day when Ippolito made no appearance at Fondi at all. The forenoon had been one of overpowering heat, but some two hours after dinner the fissures of the shutters showed such greyness, and the light was so dismal that the bars were taken down and we looked out on to what was ominous—the sun hidden behind the black density of massed clouds rolling up from the south, the mountains to the east gleaming like bronze set against a marble wall, not a breath stirring the tops of the cypress trees, and the garden and the whole world seeming to lie in hushed expectancy as we pushed open the casements. The lady Giulia began to pace to and fro through all the lower chambers, her bloodhounds, as always when she walked, padding beside her. The storm was imminent, and when the lightning came it was so vivid, and the almost simultaneous thunder was so crashing, that it seemed as if the universe must be in pieces. Even the fatherly major-domo, Dominico Bracci, was a little pale as he came to us, and himself helped to shut the casements again, saying reassuringly that the tempest was travelling fast and would soon pass over us. I, who was peeping without, saw that



the clouds had changed to an angry purple, and there was a murmur which was not that of wind and which increased to a crackling roar as the tops of the cypresses swayed and bent; then the purple pall above them became a white mist, and a storm of hailstones swept over the gardens and battered against the walls of the palazzo like a fusillade.

The storm lasted for some time, and when it was over there was a reviving freshness in the air, and Gandolfo Porrino observed at the supper table that it would be delightful to ride forth presently. The lady Giulia at once begged that we would all do so, but she excused herself saying that the thunder had brought her a headache: I excused myself also, furnishing the same reason. I had been confident that Ippolito would come to us from Itri before sundown, but the now-waning moon arose and looked down on the duchess alone among the parterres: for she had said to me that the paths were probably dry again and that she wished to walk a little in the garden before she retired. The air was damp and rather chill, and puddles of water still lay about, and she would have me attend her no farther than the terrace, and I willing enough to be spared the enforced converse of a promenade, for there was between us in these days that which cannot be unpacked in phrases. She came back presently from the pleached alley and stood long motionless by the pool: there was no sound but the splashing of the fountain and now and then the faint call of an owl.<sup>43</sup> I was very weary, and I welcomed heartily the clatter which the riding party made presently outside the garden wall. We were all in our beds at last.

I awoke suddenly some hours later in the darkness, but not conscious that any noise had waked me. As I have already written down, I now slept in the room next to that of the lady Giulia, her two women lying in a closet beyond me. In the wall opposite the lady Giulia's own bed, a doorway, concealed behind the hangings, led into another closet lined with chests holding apparel, and out of this a door, bolted and barred, gave on to the drawbridge which spanned the Appian Way between the palazzo and the keep: the windlass which worked the chains being in the keep itself. Although it was always down, neither I, nor (so I should have averred) anyone else, had ever given thought to the drawbridge as an actual passage from the one structure to the other, and no one in my knowledge had ever suggested making use of it. But when I had risen up and had become aware that the Cardinal de' Medici was in the lady Giulia's bedchamber, I realised instantly that the bridge had been his path of attainment.

I was now an invisible spectator. Ippolito had flung his cloak on to a

chair and with the utmost insouciance he was lighting tapers in a sconce on the wall with the small torch he carried; and from the wide bed, raised on her two wrists, the lady Giulia watched him, her hair loosed on her shoulders like the dark winds that hiss in the night. It was comprehensible that there should be no fear in her face, for she had the knowledge that she could summon me at once with a cry; but it was my astonishment that she, whose anger when roused could be instant and effective and fall from her lips like a cascade, was now speechless. Her chin was raised, and her eyes narrowed between her eyelids seemed to be looking at something afar, and it was almost as if she was unaware of Ippolito's bodily presence at all. I knew then that I had seen this very look in the face of the dying who come to the signpost to a land they do not know: it points to a land where the mists swim and on a sudden they desire to explore it.

Ippolito had paused in the middle of the floor, but not irresolutely, and I now stepped over the threshold of the chamber. He turned and saw me and I thought that he meant to curse me. But after a few moments when we all remained immovable as marble, he laughed; and I knew as I heard him that for me there would never be forgiveness. He laughed again as he took up his cloak and drew aside the wall-hanging. We heard the clang of the farther door on to the bridge, and I took a taper and went instantly to examine it. Opening it on to the air and the bridge I looked at its outer face, and, as I had supposed, that had no fastening at all, nor was there any lock for a key. I then scrutinised the bolt and the bar on the inner side and saw that they had been recently oiled. I stood gazing at the door after I had made it fast as if by gazing I could solve this strange problem. Unto this day I have been unable to do so.

When I went back to the bed chamber I found the lady Giulia unrelaxed and still supported by her stiffened arms, but when I stood at the bedside she suddenly flung them wide and sank back on the pillows. She turned her head restlessly from side to side as if in pain, and when I leaned over her she moaned *Why did he come: As if it could have any end.*

Response from me would have had little utility, but with the knowledge that the drawbridge door could not have been left open for Ippolito without connivance in some guise or another, I thought it well to make some parade of my wakefulness during these night hours. To this end I roused the waiting-women from slumber which appeared valid enough, and, with speech of the sleeplessness of her highness and my fears that she had a little fever, I made them prepare a cooling drink and

would have one of them remain in the chamber. The duchess I think recognised my sagacity and resigned herself to the stagers. I do not know if she slept at all.

We learned from the women in the course of the next morning that the grooms reported that the lord Cardinal with his gentlemen and men-at-arms had passed through Fondi at an early hour travelling to Rome.

During that perturbing August of the year of our Lord 1533 we had more than once talked of Caterina and of her approaching voyage to France for her marriage, and Ippolito had promised that we should have from him all that was to be told of the great occasion. But of course in the outcome he did not write to anyone at Fondi, and had it not been for the pens of others we should have learned nothing.

I had been able to dispatch to Florence in safe keeping both the bed-coverlet at which I had long laboured, and the little illuminated book of Hours which the lady Clarice Strozzi had given into my keeping against this occasion; and this brought a letter from the lady Caterina Cibo who had just arrived there, she graphic as was her wont, so that we were transported in spirit into the atmosphere of urgency and excitability that ever hangs around the preparations for even the humblest nuptials. The weaving of the wedding robe of white and gold brocade was, the duchess of Camerino said, at length accomplished, the gown was being made in the French fashion, with a closely pleated ruff at the neck, and sleeves which fitted to the arms and had a fullness at the shoulder only, and the bride was to wear with it the pearls which the Holy Father had given her.<sup>44</sup> His Holiness, as we already knew, had resigned himself to the inevitable outlay this marriage called for. Besides the pearls, he gave Caterina jewels said to be of the value of thirty thousand ducats, and including a great ruby, once the property of Pope Julius; for the bridegroom there was a cross set with precious stones, and for king Francis he had commissioned from Valerio Vicentino a casket of rock crystal all engraved with scenes from the life of our Lord, and containing a pyx embellished with rubies.<sup>45</sup> King Francis on his part was not behindhand with gifts, and his envoy the lord Lorenzo Cibo, count de Tunarra, had arrived in Florence with many rich offerings. I wondered how the nuns of the Murate would ever resign themselves to their everyday life again after all this agreeable ferment, which must have been stirring in nearly all the palazzi of Florence too, because Caterina

was to be accompanied from Italy by twelve young and noble ladies of Florentine birth, as well as by her elderly relatives the duchess of Camerino, the lady Maria Salviati, the lord Palla Rucellai and the lord Filippo Strozzi: all the needles in Florence must have been kept busy day and night, and needles farther afield were recruited too, for we learnt in a letter which came to the lady Giulia from the lady Isabella d' Este that the duchess of Camerino had arrived in Florence to find all the preparations inadequate and behindhand, and had sent to Mantua two dresses and two petticoats to be given to some good craftsmen to be brodered for her excellency of Orleans, together with the designs and the necessary gold and silver and coloured silks, and money moreover with the courier to buy fine black silk and crimson and gold silk for cloaks and for sheets: and all to be dispatched to Nice if it was not possible to have them ready for the setting forth from Florence.<sup>46</sup>

In Rome, during the following winter, I could often induce the lady Caterina Cibo to a loquacity about this alliance with the royal family of France, for it was a proud event in the annals of the house of Medici, and she was not too unworldly to appreciate the prestige it had brought. But she was always exclamatory over the inauspicious impediments and embarrassments that had pursued the affair from the time the duchessina was six years old,<sup>47</sup> and she declared that when Caterina finally became very unwell with a high fever only a few days before they must set out for Porto Venere, she had greatly desired to beat her: already there had been the agitation of the grave illness of king Francis himself at Lyons on his journey south, and then the ill-tidings that his Holiness, too, was so indisposed that it was doubted if he could travel.

I had a pang of compassion for Caterina, conceiving the transitory fever to be evidence of secret panic and distress of spirit which had its effect on her body because there was no one among those around her to give her understanding and to lend her strength. Had I been there I should have been useless as any, for I had never had her childish confidence: indeed she had never given that to anyone save Ippolito. But the sense of deportment ingrained in her had come, as always, to her aid. This capacity had always seemed to me to be genuine fortitude mingled with something that was more subtle; and, speaking of her propriety and modesty during these farewell months in Florence, the duchess of Camerino yet had a smile for her excellency of Orleans' fugitive experiments in the regal manner even in the convent,<sup>48</sup> and she said that Caterina's new urbanity to Alessandro was very droll too. It was unexpected that I should have a faint twinge of pity for this Alessandro as

well, I not doubting that he had always furtively desired Caterina's affection, and that the scornful dislike she had shown him from babyhood onwards had been a provocation of his gracelessness; and now he alone of her near relatives was excluded from this occasion of grandeur. That he had commissioned a portrait of her from Giorgio Vasari,<sup>49</sup> that he had provided for her a farewell banquet to the noble ladies of the city, that he had accompanied her on the first stage of the journey and had made a loan of his pages to accompany her to France, were all decorums in which I distinguished the quiet management of messer Ottaviano.

It was straight from the aforesaid banquet in the palazzo in the via Larga, on the first day of September, and three hours after noon, with the sun beating down on the heads of the populace packing the streets, that Caterina set out with her retinue to meet destiny. The company slept that night at Poggio a Caiano and the next night the duchess of Urbino (as all the documents called her) and all the ladies were lodged in the palazzo of the Panciatici at Pistoia.<sup>50</sup> Then by way of Lucca and Massa they came to the gulf of Spezzia where 18 galleys were lying in the harbour of Porto Venere, and where the duke of Albany received them with seventy gentlemen of France in attendance. It was in a vessel with bellying purple sails brodered in gold and carrying a standard with the arms of the Medici impaled with those of de la Tour d'Auvergne, that Caterina left Italy. The favouring wind brought the flotilla to Villafranca on the coast of Savoy, and then in the adjacent town of Nice, once proposed as the place of the marriage ceremony itself, over six weeks went by before the cavalcade was formed again and took its way over the mountain roads to Marseilles.

The lady Caterina Cibo confessed to me that those weeks of waiting tried the equanimity of all. The duke of Albany had obtained permission from the duke of Savoy for a lodging for Caterina and her ladies in the castello at Nice, but he was greatly angered when they arrived there to find little preparation made for their coming, and before putting to sea again to meet his Holiness, he would persuade the travellers to remove themselves inland to the fine castello of Villeneuve-Loubet<sup>51</sup> where the lady Anne de Lascaris, countess of Villars, kept great state and was anxious to welcome them. The lord Filippo Strozzi however judged that a change of quarters would be ill-advised, for this castello was over the French frontier in the country of Provence, the lady Anne was of kin both to king Francis and to duke Charles of Savoy, and it was decided that it were better to avoid all imbroglia, to support discomfort and to betray no umbrage.<sup>52</sup> The lord Filippo would have Caterina pen

a courteous letter to the duchess of Savoy and this she did with quiet jesting.<sup>53</sup> In all this the lord Filippo displayed his usual caution, for there was to be no betrothal until the king of France had his way with his Holiness, and in the first place a month went by before the Pope came at all, it being the 7th day of October before the sails of the fleet, which had gathered at Leghorn to escort him and to protect him from the fusts of Barbarossa, were sighted out at sea. He put into Villafranca and took on board the lord Filippo and messer Francesco Guicciardini who had come from Florence to be in charge of the contract of marriage, and then Marseilles was sighted at last, and to the crashing of bells and noisy salvoes of artillery, all were landed presently to find themselves puppets in a well-devised pageantry which was under the ordering of the grand-marshal of France, the lord Anne de Montmorency.

The lord Filippo returned to Nice by road in a few days time, and all was made ready to cross the frontier when the word should arrive, but the lady Caterina Cibo said that they were equally prepared for a return voyage to Italy, the Strozzi being quite uncertain how things would go. He said that king Francis might take his pleasure, but men recognised that he put his realm before all, and it was murmured that the king of England had recently urged on him that this marriage was unworthy of his royal house and the Pope never to be trusted. He had made the long journey across France in a resolute temper, and his palazzo in Marseilles had been connected by his orders with that set apart for his Holiness, a bridge spanning the street between the two. Pope Clement, who was feeling the heat greatly and was sleeping in a pavilion in the garden, had declared privately to the lord Filippo and others that he was obstinate not to set his hand to any document which would re-establish the French in Italy; but when the courier with the summons to set out arrived in Nice on the 26th day of October it was clear that he must have done so.<sup>54</sup>

I was told that Caterina had flagged to some extent in health and spirit in these days of suspense and in the great heat which tried everybody; but her precocity was always there, and she had occupied herself with the practice of the French tongue, and with learning some dances in the French fashion; sending to the duke of Albany for a drummer who had been on board one of the galleys.<sup>55</sup> Her overtaken fortitude, however, was betrayed by a bitter fit of weeping before they started on their pilgrimage through the mountains. Once they were set out they pressed on, sleeping one night at the castello of the count of Provence (Brignoles) and halting on the last day for dinner at a village

within an hour's ride of Marseilles (Aubagne). Ippolito and the other Cardinals of the Medici had ridden forth to meet them at a villa on the confines of the city, and here, after a change of dress, they mounted the hackneys which had been provided for the entry. The procession, with Caterina in its midst on a red roan caparisoned in gold brocade, passed presently through the silent and unsmiling crowds in the alleys of the city, and I drew from the duchess of Camerino something of what it felt like to encounter the hostile spirit of a foreign land. She had wondered how far it would unnerve Caterina, and she and the lady Maria on either side of her had exchanged anxious looks as they ascended the great stair of the palazzo on their arrival. But the girl never faltered, she said, and was a miracle of grace and diffidence as she advanced down the long sala between the curious faces of the courtiers to kneel before his Holiness and then to sink into her skirts in obeisance before the towering and laughing majesty of France. This one raised her and embraced her with great heartiness, and with merry jests would have the dukes of Orleans and Angoulême who were beside him emulate his example: then he must lead her himself to the apartments of the queen,<sup>56</sup> and from that hour onwards he showed his friendship for her: and the duchess of Camerino gave her opinion that Caterina would need a friend in her new life, for the Italian marriage plainly enraptured none in the court nor the kingdom, and the unfledged bridegroom least of all. But, having at length put his hand to it, the king carried all through with gusto, and the betrothal, and the nuptial Mass two days later on the Feast of S. Simone and S. Jude, when his Holiness himself gave the rings, were all set round with festivities that were magnificent, and, for so it seemed to me, to the point of insobriety. The lady Caterina Cibo had pride in the tale that when she and the lady Maria put the duchess of Orleans in the bridal bed it was in the company of the queens of France, of Scotland and of Navarre, but I always refrained from asking for the truth of the babblement that king Francis in over hilarious mood refused to be ejected from the chamber.<sup>57</sup>

I had little difficulty in discovering how Ippolito had held himself at this court among the scornful nobles of France—he the bastard of what they held to be a family of merchants. Since he must go, he had resolved that it should be in full panoply, and he had set no limit to his expenditure. Tongues twittering over his debts in Rome afterwards said that his display had exceeded that of the king himself, and his troop of pages in their fantastic dresses of green velvet with turbans and scimitars were in evidence long after his return.<sup>58</sup> It is not to be doubted

that one must be superb to win recognition from the world, which is only attracted by mystery, and that it is the human being around whom light glitters who is the man of mystery. It was the unknown in him which beckoned to the spirit as Ippolito moved among his heraldry, and I learned that his spell had worked with king Francis from the onset, the Cardinal de' Medici being bidden to supper on the first evening of the Pope's arrival and ever after kept at the king's side: yet holding himself remotely there for all his ribald wit and his audacity of invention when mummery was called for. The lady Caterina Cibo said that there was no woman in the court who did not watch him under her eyelids; and when I asked how it went with Caterina herself, she said that both cousins had shown a perfect circumspection in the days of wearying revelry which succeeded the nuptials, and she doubted if they would have seen each other alone before they parted, for Caterina carried herself among the scarcely veiled insolence of the ladies of her French household with a noticeable caution.

I pictured her to myself in her new surroundings, seeing her silent and very observant, recognising the good-will of the king as her only pledge and particular to return it. To one is this, and to another that, on the journey through this world, and I recalled the philosophy of messer Michelagnolo Buonorrotti, and reflected that the duchess of Orleans would not perhaps fail to find existence interesting even if it did not give her the one enduring thing for woman. Ippolito, who had been set in her young life for the vision and the snare, would be for her some day just the tale forgotten.

The papal court did not return to Rome until November was nearly out, and Gandolfo Porrino, who went to spend some weeks there, wrote that his Holiness was in bad health and worse spirits. The physicians, who could do little for him, were disposed to support the rumours that he had been poisoned by the French or by the Florentines on the return voyage from Marseilles, but, as m<sup>sr</sup> Porrino said, it was probable that his gastric complaint had been made worse by unrest of body and mind. In king Francis he had found a master spirit, and, over and above what had been treated for secretly, it was known that a promise had been extracted that the Council of the Church should be deferred, and should be held in Italy when it did take place: moreover Pope Clement had been forced not only to nominate French Cardinals but to agree to suspend the excommunication of king Henry of England.



I travelled with the lady Giulia to spend the feasts of Christmas and the Epiphany with the lady Vittoria Colonna at Ischia. Don Juan de Valdès was of the company as well as the lady Costanza d' Avalos, Mgr Carnesecchi and others. I have a grateful memory for those southern winter days of peace and unbroken sunshine, of quiet reflection and counsels exchanged. It was from don Juan, at Ischia, that we first heard the name of Bernardino Ochino, and were given some account of all the part the lady Caterina Cibo had played in the establishment of the Cappucini of the Franciscan Order in Rome. Then when we were returned to Fondi, and a letter came from the lady Caterina herself, telling that the Frate Ochino was to preach in Lent in the chapel of San Lorenzo in San Damaso in the palazzo of the Cancelleria, and begging the lady Giulia to come to Rome to hear him, I realised the opportunity provided for us both to see Ippolito again.

We went to Rome in the month of February, with a small household only, and none of the ladies save myself and madonna Agnese Ferraioli, and we occupied some of our usual rooms in the palazzo of the Colonna. The city made a fresh impression on me as hushed and lifeless, and the Cardinals were leading quiet lives; but, in the week before Lent began, the Cardinal Farnese gave a reception to all the nobility of Rome in his splendid new palazzo on the bank of the Tiber, which he had built out of blocks from the Coliseum and from the theatre of Marcellus. It had a grandeur which was more absolute than that of Ippolito's palazzo close by, and the luxury of the interior had a sober restraint. The Cardinal Farnese himself, recently recovered from illness, was now the oldest of all the Cardinals, as well as the richest, the most learned and the most experienced, and it was said that his Holiness had named him to more than one person as his most fitting successor should his own life not be prolonged. He held the lady Giulia's hand paternally in his own for a few moments after she had made her reverence, and it was as if his instinct was awakened to the restlessness working in her now for many months, and made almost articulate by the new daring of her robe of alessandrine-coloured satin bordered with sables, and the great aquamarines set in the crown of her plaited hair and swinging in her ears. But the salas through which she carried the unsmiling beauty of what was now a mature womanhood were empty of Ippolito.

He was said to be little in Rome, and neither in society nor in public did we come to sight of him, but he had been enlisted to the party of Cappucini in the passionate battle which was raging between them-

selves and the Osservanti, and he had lent the church which was a part of his palazzo<sup>59</sup> to the Order for a course of Lenten sermons. When we entered the church by the west doorway which gave on to the street for the first of these sermons, I wondered if he would be there himself: and he came presently with his train borne behind him, and occupied a seat under the pulpit alongside others of the Curia.

All Rome was present, packed on benches, or standing crushed and craning, the great semi-circular window behind the tribune lighting the up-turned faces: and a voice soared and fell, and tried to make it inevitable for us to believe in our own lives and in the God who endures us in the infinite and everlasting. To-day when the Frate Ochino has fled from Italy to escape the Holy Office,<sup>60</sup> I would try to recall the matter of these crowded sermons in San Lorenzo with ill-success; and even at the time I think my consciousness was only for the magnetic liting of the words, and for the discovery that somehow the tune of the world had altered in these latter days, and here was a different watchword being passed down by the angels to mortal ears. The monk was very tall, with blue eyes set in a wasted countenance and with a great beard.

We always left the church after these recurring sermons by the north doorway into the cortile of the palazzo, and on this first occasion I had wondered if Ippolito had been conscious of us in the congregation, and if he would anywhere be visible: but there was no sign of him, although we lingered for some time under the arcade as the lady Giulia was greeted by one and another, and as the litters made away and clattered into the campo del Fiore. On a subsequent day, however, the lady Caterina Cibo, with her young daughter the lady Giulia Varano, came out from the church at our side, and she was insistent that we should go into the garden of the Cancelleria to see the Barbary lion which king Francis had given Ippolito, and which was in a cage there next to a bear which belonged to herself. It was a fine morning, and when we emerged from the twilight of the passage-way through the palazzo, Ippolito, clad in the glowing red of his ecclesiastical rank, was standing in the sunshine, with a green box-hedge and ilex trees behind him. I halted by the archway as the three ladies went forward, and it came into my mind that, when he was a child, Pietro Bembo had spoken of him often as a rose: *beautiful as a beautiful rose, and no flower in the garden as lovely as he*, was what he had said more than once.<sup>61</sup>

Gentlemen of the household and others were standing about, so the duchess of Camerino made her reverence with severe particularity.

I watched Ippolito stiffen his whole being as he gave his ring to the duchess of Trajetto who followed her, but the lady Giulia Varano, when her turn for the obeisance came, tripped over her skirts and would have fallen, and she clung, laughing, to her cousin's hand. He took his train into his own keeping and walked affectionately by the girl's side down the path to the cages at the bottom of the garden. When they all returned he was in front with the duchess of Camerino, and as they came towards me I heard that their topic was the Frate Ochino, the Prior Ludovico da Fossombrone, and all the affair of the fraternity with their beards and four-pointed hoods, and the lady Caterina earnest and emphatic, for this matter was with her the paramount interest of the hour. It was one of those moments of seeing persons very clearly as they are, and I realised her as a little tiresome in her sincerity and ability; and I wondered if the ladies of the French court had been supercilious over a certain lack of elegance both in the lady Maria Salviati and herself. She was holding her cloak together now in clumsy fashion and a lock of her hair unloosed and straying.

The group stood near me in continued converse, but Ippolito gave me no greeting, and it was as if he did not see me at all. That he was swaying slightly on his heels was perhaps a sign of malaise, but otherwise he displayed none, and the lady Giulia, tall as he, pale as he, and his rival in masquerade, displayed none either. I knew that the lady Caterina Cibo had persuaded his Holiness, when he was at Viterbo, to give the followers of the monk Matteo da Bascio who followed the stricter rule a brief which established them as a branch of the Franciscans, and that with her help they had accomplished a settlement in Rome, taking charge of the hospital of S. Giacomo and having for their own the church of S. Maria dei Miracoli: all this had been done in the face of the fierce opposition of the parent society, and the Pope had put the whole dispute into the hands of the Cardinals del Monte and della Valle. But, as always in Rome, the matter had been overlaid with the baffling chicanery and casuistry which defeats spirits, who, like the lady Caterina and the Prior Ludovico himself, have the talent for conviction. I had always recognised the lady Giulia's powers of summary and judgment, and she now contrived to be very remote in her listless arrogance as I overheard her say that to adventure too much like the Cappucini is never a prudence, because great ones begin to have an uneasy sense that thrones are shifting, and that to steer the barque of the new Order among the vexations that were raising their heads needed more worldly adroitness than heavenly vision: she saw in the Prior, she pronounced,

the tenseness and excitement of a nature not sufficiently emotional, and felt that he vibrated harshly on one or two chords only, and failed to prevail on this account. Ippolito raised his eyebrows slightly at this philippic. His bearing towards the two noble ladies could not be called actively discourteous, but I thought them justified when they presently took an opportunity to sweep their draperies out of the garden without formal farewell. I love stout expressions, and anger that is vigorous and generous, and as we stood under the arcade of the cortile the lady of Camerino did not spare her opinion of the whole monstrous regiment of man: Ippolito had made her a promise that he would do his best for the Cappucini, she declaimed, and that he had lent them his church had seemed guerdon of it, and now it was evident that he did not mean to exert himself in the matter at all.<sup>62</sup>

It had hardly needed this encounter in the garden to make it clear that Ippolito was bent on demonstration that for him dalliance was now at an end. And it belonged to the soundness of the lady Giulia's temperament that she met this harlequinade with resolute coolness, and that when we returned to Fondi she had regained a command of herself which in the previous autumn had seemed to be slipping from her. She did not attend another of the sermons in S. Lorenzo, and a decision to leave Rome before Easter was accounted for to me by the information she gave me that the lady Isabella was coming south again, and was bringing her son to Pagliano. The lady Giulia was reluctant to meet her, she said, because a great dispute concerning the feudal inheritance was now between them, the lady Isabella maintaining that her father the lord Vespasiano Colonna was acting outside law and custom when he had devised the feudal possessions to his widow without having the consent of the vassals. I was convinced that it was the lord Luigi who had first stirred up this question, which was to be a continual unhappiness in the next few years, and, after our return to the palazzo on the Appian Way, the lady Giulia was much occupied with messer Porrino and his clerk, and there was writing to and fro, and couriers going constantly south to Sicily, taking letters to the lord Ferrante Gonzaga, who was now viceroy there, this post having been obtained for him from the emperor by the lady Isabella his mother.<sup>63</sup> The affair of the inheritance must come before the emperor when he arrived in Naples, and the lady Giulia was anxious to have the facts made known, and placing irrational reliance in the belief that either truth and justice, or a dead man's wishes, or, perchance, her own persuasiveness must prevail. I myself saw clearly that the lady Isabella was in the stronger position,

for the lady Giulia, who must lose all if she took another husband, was no asset to any ruler whose courtiers needed well-dowered brides.

At times, as the summer dragged on, this trouble seemed to me to be our only present link with a world that had grown infinitely distant, and that was mute, and awaiting, I suppose, on the expected death of the Pope. As had happened four years before, his illness had its vacillations, and more than once we heard that he was better, and more than once that he was dead. It seemed a foolishness that the doctors did not make him leave Rome, which was never healthy at this time of year, and the Cardinals all lingering there in anticipation of a conclave paid a toll, for the Cardinals Enkevoirt, della Valle, and Cajetan all died. Ippolito himself had not gone to Tivoli as usual, and rumour roving down the Appian Way said that his Holiness' improvement in the month of June was due to this, and to the fact that the Cardinal de' Medici had at last promised to submit to the tonsure and to take both Deacon's and Priest's Orders, the Holy Father's satisfaction being so great that he had again paid all the Cardinal's debts.<sup>64</sup> The tale had a staleness, and I knew a growing sense of fatigue about the future which I saw as vapid and endless. And my prayers to Heaven for my son seemed but to join all my strength to my mistrust of existence and to give art and length to all my fears.

We settled to a daily routine at Fondi which began with Mass, and included a lesson in the French or the Spanish tongue, many hours at our needles and a ride on horseback in the golden evenings. Only madonna Camilla Crescensi and madonna Onorata Pelleta had been recalled from their homes in the duchy to be in attendance and, although no one voiced it, the days that went by without the bracing relief of change and excitement discouraged the small court and gave it a sense of neglect by the world. But the duchess carried her head on its slender neck as if everything she did was a festival for herself and those around her, for this interlude served as opportunity to prepare for the day when the emperor should come to Naples and when all Italy would flock there. The Cardinal de' Medici had been able to evade the issue of herself in Rome, but he would be unable to do that in Naples. Already, as I became aware, she was negotiating for the purchase of a great palazzo in the Borgo delle Vergini, and the silk of the colour of dead chestnut leaves, which we were laboriously sprigging with watchet-blue, would no doubt make the gown in which she would receive Caesar there. It is a fine thing to be a young and beautiful princess to whom such dreams are valid, but, in the outcome, she won beforehand to a great

renown and to a coming together with Ippolito in a way which would have strained the invention of any weaver of romances. And there was no court in the world where the tale was not an amazement.

Whenever life is suddenly disconnected by a convulsion from all that has gone before and from all that is to follow afterwards, the gap made seems an aberration, and it will even appear as if what has happened did not really happen at all. This is why it is heaviness to write of the August night when, with the swiftness of a thunder-bolt, the Turks appeared in Fondi, and Dominico Bracci, bursting through my chamber into that of the lady Giulia, had her out of bed and the door behind the hangings unbolted before I could understand that the palazzo itself was actually in the hands of a terrible enemy even then swarming from the courtyard into the lower rooms.<sup>65</sup>

It became subsequently a legend in all Europe that the object of this landing at Sperlonga, and the raid on Fondi in the dark hours before dawn, was to capture the duchess of Trajetto for the seraglio of the sultan; and there is likelihood in the tale, for it had long been known that many at his elbow desired to see the kadin Roxelana supplanted. The sultan had taken no wife, and the agents in Constantinople had long reported that this Russian slave, who was the daughter of a priest, would not unlikely win to that status. She was said to have a joyous spirit and to have borne the sultan four sons, and her influence had always to be reckoned with by those who would have their own influence prevail. Thus it is creditable that the Turkish admiral Khiyr-ed-din<sup>66</sup> did hope to make the lady Giulia a captive, but much that has been said and written since would seek to make it seem that the rape of one woman was the sole reason that nearly a hundred new Turkish keels had been laid down, and that when the Barbarossa, as he was called, brought them out into the open seas from the Golden Horn for their first voyage, the adventure had this solitary intention: whereas, as is now known, the foray on Fondi was but the climax of a campaign of raiding that had begun in the straits of Messina.

No one observed it at the time, but the reflection came to me afterwards that the emperor's subjects were but poorly served by the viceroys of Sicily and Naples. The Turks had anchored in the straits and had sacked both Messina and Reggio, and when they disappeared northwards they could not have travelled so fast but that horsemen could have been beforehand with them to warn all the populations of the

Calabrian and the Neapolitan coasts. Yet San Lucido and Cetraro de Monaci were both taken by surprise, Naples was astonished to see the ships of the infidels crossing the bay, under the very eyes of Naples the island of Procida was devastated, and that same evening a landing was made at Sperlonga, while we at Fondi went to our beds unthinking. The heathen on the decks of the galleys would be lusting for fire and slaughter as for a pastime, but these onslaughts on places that were so unprotected were practical too, and meant a great haul of booty for the Turk. Men for the oars, women and girls for the harems, and boys to be trained as janissaries must have been carried away in hundreds; and all this human spoil was so plentiful on the coast itself that the expedition inland to Fondi could only have had the definite object of seizing the duchess. Whosoever guided the corsairs through the foothills and the vineyards in the darkness brought them straight to the palazzo, and then, when it was realised that the lady Giulia had escaped, led them forthwith to the convent of the Benedictines on the hillside beyond the walls where it must have been supposed that she had taken refuge.

It was a night of extremity of horror, when the sickness of terror was for all, abomination was for many, and death the stark reality for many more. When familiar life began again mine own experience was, I believe, that of others, and that we had been so morally overtasked that all energy was unconsciously directed to trying to think of secondary detail only, and to restraining from either remembrance or recital of the infernal. Madonna Onorata, for an instance, had strained her foot very badly in jumping from her window, and this mishap which might have occurred to her on any ordinary weekday, was a godsend, and a common incident on which we might concentrate attention and sympathy, and so ignore the awful fact that madonna Camilla's dead body had never been found. The one had only been able to drag herself to the box hedge, and flinging herself into it had remained undiscovered in a quest thwarted by the trickery of torchlight, but the other, able to reach the door in the garden wall, had met with some unthinkable fate.

All the occurrence, as I had experience of it, must be set down. At the time the darkness made it the more appalling, but, had it not been for that same darkness, I doubt if there would have been salvation for any unable to get a horse and make away. I always kept a small lamp burning, and I was from my bed and scarce awake, and without any understanding when I seized it and followed the man who had passed with hoarse summons through my chamber. But the lady Giulia had, I suppose, recognised the steward's voice and was instantly alive to peril,

for even as I was in the doorway she was on the floor in her shift and all fire and ice. Clamour and shrieks were now in our ears, and she sprang to the hangings and uncovered the door behind them. The women who slept beyond were now on us, and in another moment we were all five in the closet and D. Bracci was tugging at the bolts of the door to the bridge. It seemed as if they would never give. I blew out the lamp as they shot back and put around the duchess the coverlet which I had snatched from the bed: before us was the narrow bridge, with the stars above it and torches in the street below: my brain had cleared, and I realised that, for those who carried the torches, what was overhead would be invisible.

We crossed in breathless panic to the keep and found the door there open to the air. My eye fell at once on the windlass, and it seemed to me so imperative to raise the bridge that I put my hand to it and fiercely commanded Anna and Maria to do the same. After a brief and agonised struggle I knew we should never move it, and I found that the duchess and Bracci had vanished. We groped our way until we came to what I felt to be a newel stair, and in an instant I was climbing it followed by the two women, we panting and stumbling in the dark to the next floor with a trapdoor discernible opening to the sky and a leaning ladder. We scrambled to the roof, drew up the ladder and shut the trap.

We spent the night on the roof in safety and it is useless to wonder why. There must have been a search of the keep, for we heard harsh voices and saw light flickering through the cracks of the trapdoor on which we were all sitting; but I suppose the trap was not espied, or that there was no means of reaching it. All became quiet again, and after a long time I found courage to prop the ladder against the parapet and to peer down. Here and there in the town fires were blazing, and the devilry that was afoot was but too audible. We crouched shivering under the stars growing pale in what seemed an eternity, and then over the mountains crept at last the colour of the dawn, and the tops of the cypresses stirred gently with the whisper of a little wind that had stolen up from the sea. The birds were singing, and the town, still burning in places, now lay in a stillness that was as terrible as the clamour of the night hours. From the parapet I made sure at last that the night's work was over and the foe withdrawn. Leaving Anna and Maria to follow me when they dared, I lowered the ladder, and went right down the newel stair until I reached the stable which occupied the whole of the ground floor of the keep: all the horses were gone, all the doors open, and no human being visible. Outside in the street were corpses which



I tried not to look at, and when I crossed into the cortile of the palazzo it was the same thing: and everything freckled with blood: and then I heard a voice, and Gandolfo Porrino came into the loggia, and he ran to me down the steps and took my hands, and we wept, and had no words until he found wise ones and said that I must go to my chamber and find my attire. He brought me wine and bread while I was there among the havoc, and he told me that he had rushed to warn us as soon as himself aware, and finding us gone, and not instantly remembering the bridge door, he had swung himself out of a window and dropped to the ground: then there had just been time to plunge into the tank and hide under the leaves of the lilies before the garden itself was invaded.

There are days in life which are scarcely to be faced, and this which had just dawned was one of them. There was everything to be done, yet we knew not where, nor how, to begin. A shout from below presently startled us, and Gandolfo Porrino, going to make discovery, came back to report the captain Riccacalti, who having escaped on horseback had just ridden back, and who brought the hopeful intelligence that the lady Giulia had been saved in that way too. I went to him and he related that, when the alarm came, the grooms and the few men-at-arms had instantly resolved to seize the horses, and only by laying about him with his sword was he able to keep three of the animals in the stalls. He had barred the door after the fugitives and had set to work with bridles and saddles by the light of a lantern, but without any notion how this should avail: then the miracle of the apparition of the duchess and the steward had occurred, and he had them up at once and forth. He said there was but the delay of a few moments before he himself was after them, but he could not overtake them, and he finally lost track of them when they reached the forest and the mountains.<sup>67</sup>

We were all in agreement that the duchess would be now in safety, and that with her daring, her horsemanship, and her knowledge of the mountain roads she would have gained either Campomedile or Vallecosa. At all events any immediate search for her was impossible, the two men saying that the essential was to bury the dead, and, if possible, to get a horseman sent to Naples to acquaint the viceroy. Whereon I declared that in my opinion a horseman to Rome with the tale to the lord Ippolito de' Medici would bring us surer succour. Both the gentlemen applauded this, and they went forth to make discovery if anyone of authority was to be found.

I hold it to be unavailing to judge any for what they did or did not do, on this night of terror. In romances men count it glory to make a stand

in the face of danger, but this danger came to each individual in his own chamber in the darkness, and in the midst of a community never organised for defence. It would have been impossible for the most intrepid spirit to rally any effective force around him and personal prowess would have been a vain thing. Both his Excellency the Archbishop, and the podestà, messer Steccacio, took horse and saved their lives, and history I suppose will remember it; but any other conduct would have been useless heroism. The lady Giulia would always say simply that she herself had fled, and she would never allow discussion about the conduct of others. The whole misfortune has to be traced to a neglect which may have been centuries old. Fondi had its walls, but its gates were unguarded and had never been shut at night time, and I do not think that the lady Giulia coming to such conditions is to be blamed for not altering them. She had the argument that the lord Vespasiano had seen no danger.

But consideration of these matters was the last of my occupations at the time. I did not go from the palazzo at all, for there were those yet alive among the bodies lying in the chambers and the courtyard, these wounded to be tended, they and others to be fed, few hands for the task and the heat very great. The Franciscan Brothers with many of the citizens came from Itri, and the burial of the dead was going on as fast as was possible *msr* Porrino told me. He said it would never be really possible to say who had been slaughtered and who had been carried off: few were left in the monastery of S. Dominic and fewer still in the convent of the Benedictine Sisters, but the monastery of S. Magno outside the walls had been left undisturbed. A large body of Turks had swept on to Itri in the dawn, but finding the population there roused and resolute, and the town difficult to attack because of its steep gradient, they had returned by the hill-path to Sperlonga. Later we heard that Terracina had suffered assault and a toll taken.

It was on the second day that the lady Giulia rode back to Fondi from Campomedile<sup>68</sup> with a strong escort from that place. And it was on the third day at sundown that Anna came running, all aglow, and I could no other than go through to the piazza in front of the Cathedral to see Ippolito miraculously arrived there, and sitting his horse stern as a Roman warrior of old as he listened to one and another at his stirrup.

The lady duchess had arrived back from Campomedile impassioned and shaken, and she would at once be busied with hearing and seeing and directing, and even lending the aid of her own hands as far as she could, and it was with difficulty that I could persuade her to rest even

when night came. I brought her spiced wine as she lay in her bed at last, and I sat by her as she told me with strained vivaciousness of that wild night ride in the hill air: but for the tingling cold, she said, it would have been like a dream: and she created for me the dark forest, the whitening dawn which made the mountains seem incredibly large, the sky breaking into streaks of purple and grey, the track which they often feared to have lost, and then a road, and a bend in it, and a town suddenly there. I questioned her with particularity about her reception, her lodging, the attire found for her, and what this and that one had exclaimed, for I thought it better her mind should dwell on all that adventure than on anything to which she had returned in Fondi. Domenico Bracci had been left behind in Campomedile in the hands of the apothecary there, he being greatly exhausted.

I had lightly drugged the wine, and she fell asleep at last and slept until late next day. Our hasty supper in the midst of our pre-occupations had been over for some three hours or so when Ippolito came, and after my sight of him in the piazza I must hasten to tell her. They met in the great sala where blood was still smeared on the onyx floor and where the torn velvet hangings drooped awry over the doors. One window only had been unshuttered after the heat of the day, and Ippolito was standing in the shadow when she crossed the light to him. Her linen gown was stained, her roughened hair fell in one plait to her waist, and anguish had wrought its havoc in her countenance; but as she came to him it was as if she heard some cleansing clarion call, and she gave him her two hands as if giving herself with perfect trust to a partner in a dance. He took her hands in his gloved ones and stood scrutinising her with a grave intentness. The dust of the road lay thick on him, his face was covered with sweat and his eyes glazed with fatigue, and all in her service. He bent his head presently and raised her hands and kissed them both, and as he did so crimson flooded her cheeks and all her forehead and her bosom. He told her that the papal troops were in his wake and should arrive before the next daylight.

The Ippolito who had come to Fondi now was one whom I had only guessed at. Here for the first time I saw him in command with a definite charge, and he rising to the height of its performance with what must have been a secret exultation in his own efficacy. Now that the cruel raid was over it may have seemed that to put the walls in repair and to man the gates was an excess of energy, for such a catastrophe could scarcely be repeated;<sup>69</sup> but I can see that the moral of the town needed to be restored and that this was the surest way. The chamber with the onyx

floor was used by Ippolito for his council chamber, and with Gandolfo Porrino for his secretary and the captain Riccacalti as his lieutenant, here all the necessary consultations took place, and the necessary assignments were made. These were busy and exhausting days for all, we women having our tasks among the suffering and the mourners, and escape from it all coming only in the late evenings when the shadows crept over the garden and the drowsing pines were black against the western sky. Bathed and recollected, with her hair plainly bound and in a house-dress of taffeta, the lady Giulia would go forth from the palazzo to walk and sit awhile; and the Cardinal Ippolito would presently join her, he too having discarded all traces of travail. In the pavilion, or on the seat at the extremity of the path where the peach trees grew, or pacing between the hedges, they held high conference: she was all kingdoms, he all princes, and all other existence had been laid to rest.

I was not particular to leave them to each other in this world-without-end. The mind with them now was for life itself and not for hours, for a blessedness that need not fade when a clock struck but would go on and conquer time and circumstance. Each had now the knowing why the other should be esteemed, and esteemed each other for that with a consciousness which like all other consciousness had vanished on becoming intense. Once they had only been attracted by what was exquisite in each other, but now everything connected with one another had a value; so that there was faith between them at last and loyalty to their destiny, and the instinct to protect themselves had been aroused. For they had to guard against allowing their relation to be made a commonplace, and this called for an imperturbability even towards each other. They made no effort to secure privacy, and none need feel exiled from the garden.

Monsignor Pellegrini and the podestà had crept back to their posts, and the former considerably disconcerted to find the Cardinal de' Medici discharging functions which belonged to himself; for Ippolito had set on foot repair of the ravages in the Cathedral and in the church of S. Pietro and elsewhere, and had commanded Masses for the Dead at all the altars. An autocracy had been in fact established which embraced every ramification of daily life, and all except Monsignor welcomed it thankfully. But it could not last. At his first coming Ippolito had made known to us how baffling the course of the Pope's illness was, and, after a fortnight had gone by, the news came that his Holiness again lay in extremis, for the alarm in Rome over the Turks had worked

on him; the fear that they might well land at Ostia next being rife in the city, and of course a possibility. So the day came when the troops from Rome were all paraded on the farther side of the keep for the return journey, and the stage was set at Ippolito's command in the piazza for the ceremony of handing back the keys of the city to the duchess. Surrounded by her diminished court, all in the decency of mourning array, she stood in front of the Cathedral door, having the Archbishop and his satellites on her right hand and the podestà and his councillors on her left. Men-at-arms the viceroy had now sent from Naples ranged the populace crowded under the walls of the buildings on either side, and then, into the space kept clear, Ippolito rode. I realised the ritual as deliberately devised to re-establish the paramountcy of the lady Giulia, and I was a commending spectator as Ippolito reined in, dismounted, made salute to all, knelt briefly on one knee before the duchess with the jangling keys, had her hand and cheek in courteous farewell when he rose, received back his charger from the grooms, and was up and sitting it like a rock as it reared. In another minute he had ridden forth from the piazza and up the Appian Way to the north between the houses, and, after him, stepped forth all the papal horsemen, two and two, in what seemed an endless line, the purple and white pennons of the Medici fluttering on their halberds.

ITRI



# ITRI

**A**MONG those who had ridden with the papal troops from Rome to the stricken Fondi was an exiled gentleman of Florence, messer Luigi Martelli. I was able to engage him in conversation more than once on the whole matter of affairs there, and I made discovery that the resolve to uproot the duke Alessandro was not only evergreen with Ippolito himself, but was now an active project with nearly all the noble families of Florence: so it was I became aware that the summons to Fondi, which I myself had originated, meant that the stars in their courses had once more fought against Ippolito.

It appeared that the lord Filippo Strozzi, who had gone as papal envoy with Caterina to Paris, was now returned to Rome, and during the spring and summer of this year (1534) consultation between the Florentine exiles had been frequent, either in the palazzo in the via del Banco San Spirito or in Ippolito's own palazzo. The Cardinals Salviati, Ridolfi, Cibo and Gaddi were all concerned, as well as members of the Soderini, Alammani, Aldobrandini, and numberless other families,<sup>1</sup> and it had been arranged that, in this very month of August, Ippolito should leave Rome secretly with a small escort and should be joined outside Florence by a body of men-at-arms which had been recruited by a certain captain Franciolino: the walls were still in ruins, the city within them was one vast repugnance, and once again nothing but mischance stood between the plan and its achievement. The mischance, this time, had been Fondi. Ippolito had pronounced it to be impossible to turn a deaf ear to the appeal from the raided town, and he had said that riding there would only mean a brief delay: but when the summons to the sick bed of Pope Clement found him still with us, he knew that he would have to give up the Florentine adventure altogether in the immediate future, and that he must disband the company of soldiers there for he could not afford to keep them in his pay indefinitely.<sup>2</sup>

His Holiness of course could not have been uninformed about what was going forward, for he always had his agents, and it was said freely afterwards that Ippolito's conduct had been to him the cruellest of his pressing anxieties<sup>3</sup> during this year when he had been more than once at the point of death. That he had ever feigned dying it was an impossi-



bility to suppose, even when the transaction of forcing the red hat on Ippolito was recalled, but when I saw the Cardinal de' Medici go now from Fondi to attend him in his last hours, I could not but reflect that the Pope was timing his departure from this world altogether for the advantage of his bastard son Alessandro, because it was impossible that any of the Cardinals of the Medici family could leave Rome while the important matter of the election of a new Pope was going forward. And this time it really did seem that there was to be a conclave. A few days after Ippolito's going don Juan de Valdès came through Fondi, travelling swiftly to Rome and with the tidings which had reached him that his Holiness had received Extreme Unction. As a former chamberlain he felt it decorous, he said, to be at the funeral, and, other-worldly as he was, he could obviously not resist the opportunity given to be at the centre of world-interest. He had slept for a few hours at Itri, and he stopped at Fondi for Mass and was with us afterwards in the garden for half an hour. Don Juan had the gift of the sympathy which expands itself sturdily into the experiences of others, and this half hour did much to reclaim us from our spiritual stupor. He had carried with him from Naples as a gift for the lady Giulia a book on chess called *Repeticion de amores: E arte de Axedres*<sup>4</sup> which had belonged to his father. As the duchess turned the leaves she was able to demonstrate to him the progress she had made in the Spanish tongue: and thus came reminder of the trade and way of serene living to which we seemed to have been strangers for a whole eternity. Messer Porrino laid out the chess-board in the pavilion that evening, and he and I set ourselves to it; and when don Juan came back along the Appian Way in September the smell of the Turk had died away, and the night of horror had taken its place in the past which is no longer operative.

Don Juan was returning to Naples however without the experience of the conclave, for his Holiness had come back from the gates of death as his habit was, and after the beginning of September he was so far recovered that anxiety about him was said to be quite over. But our visitor had been gone from us for five days only when the news of the end followed hard on the heels of the scarcely heeded news of another attack of fever.<sup>5</sup>

That Cardinal Farnese would be the new Pontiff was doubted by none. It counted for something that Pope Clement should often have designated him as his successor, but it counted for more that no other Cardinal

approached him either in ability or prestige, and that neither the emperor nor king Francis opposed the election. The conclave summoned on the 11th day of October was over two days later.

By that time we had gone from Fondi to the villa on Ischia which the lady Vittoria Colonna, writing from Marino, had placed at the lady Giulia's disposal. The calm horizons of the bay of Naples were a great delivery from all the humane activities which had pressed on us of late in Fondi, and as we walked in the sunny mornings along the island paths among the groves with the waters shining at our feet between the trees, the intelligence which had come of the harmony of the conclave made it seem as if a new era might be dawning and as if the mists might be clearing away for all over a tranquil landscape. The lady Vittoria had gone to Rome to pray for the conclave, and with a faint smile on her lips which was as if a bird's wing had touched the water in passing, the lady Giulia read to us a letter which she had received from her, this saying that the Cardinal de' Medici, enjoined thereto by Pope Clement on his deathbed, had exercised his powers of persuasion with the younger Cardinals and had thus made the election of his Eminence Alessandro Farnese secure: he too had been the first to convey to the new Pope the result of the voting and to give expression to his homage. A letter had come also to Gandolfo Porrino from messer Tolomei, and this told that the testament of the late Pope had been signed on the 30th day of July, on one of the occasions when he was pronounced to be dying, and that on the 23rd day of September, when he was actually dying, he had addressed a brief to the emperor which had been entrusted to Mgr Carnesecchi. The testament<sup>6</sup> left Florence and everything there, together with the villa on Monte Mario, to the duke Alessandro, and other possessions such as they were to Ippolito. The brief to the emperor<sup>7</sup> was reported to be chiefly an exhortation to Caesar to maintain Alessandro in Florence and to bring to a fulfilment the project of his marriage to the lady Margherita, and although there was some allusion to Ippolito it was only in a manner to carry the particular commendation of the other. Giulio de' Medici's last earthly pre-occupation had been to secure his son in the Florentine inheritance.

The new Pope was to be known as Paul III, so Claudio Tolomei said: The astrologer Luca Gaurico had twice foretold him his elevation, and was now to make horoscopes for the Cardinal de' Medici and others. Gandolfo Porrino was cynical that the unanimity of the conclave was perhaps partly due to the fact that Cardinal Farnese was 67 years of age and had never really recovered from his severe illness of the previous

year. Twice before this he had been on the brink of the Papacy, and now it would seem that it had come to him too late as so often happens with our dearest ambitions in this mortal life.<sup>8</sup> But, for the present, the news that travelled southwards from time to time seemed to say that all the world was well satisfied. Rome looked on the new Pope as one of her own sons, and set forth to make the festivities of the coronation into a great act of rejoicing, for the state he had consistently kept as Cardinal encouraged proud hopes of revived glories in the palazzo S. Pietro: meanwhile those of devout life and all the friends of reform of Holy Church were full of confidence, the envoys of foreign princes were relieved that an era of everlasting uncertainty had come to an end, and far away in Germany, as was learnt later on, his utterances about a General Council had secured for him a favourable reputation.

It had been the advice of the physician that the lady Giulia should remain at Ischia until the spring came round again, but we went to the convent of Santa Chiara in Naples for the festivals of Christmas and the Epiphany, and we attended many galas held in the palazzo of don Pedro di Toledo, the viceroy, and in those of the Brisegna, the Sanseverino and other noble families. The contacts of the world would be, so I thought beforehand, a providential distraction, for on the island I had watched the duchess losing her way in a fairyland where she believed she began to glimpse tokens for herself of a harmony of space and liberty. Fairy tales born of the spirit of man always seem possible, but I knew this to be nothing but the old earthly story of man and woman, he exhausting by his very nature all the impulses of love before she has done more than glimpse them: he needing the warmth and radiance of present surrender, while her fundamental self is content with a reluctant growth and her deepest instinct is for security. In the garden at Fondi in those August evenings after the raid there had been the faint rustle of the laurel trees and all things had seemed to be heightened to a new relation, and that relation everything. With quiet splendour in her heart she had gone to Ischia, and she would withdraw herself after supper and seat herself in the high embrasure of the window looking out on the dreamy shores of the waters growing black in the twilight, and as the stars came out one by one in the ash-grey of the sky she seemed to be wearing them in the crown of her dark hair: *Frons nimirum coronata supercilium nigra*.

It was with the wings of unreason unspent that she came to Naples.

The new robes and the new jewels commanded, and the prestige maintained were all a part of untold drama. As the duchess trod the floors of the great Neapolitan salas with eyes wide and lambent in the oval of her pale face, it was before an unseen audience of one that she trailed the gown of black satin and the great chain and ear-rings of uncut turquoises: and the robe of gold brocade, with sleeves of green satin bound with lacets of gold, which the viceroy lauded, was only on rehearsal before its hour of true glory dawned. She watched the world in which she moved with grace and wit as if watching a child at play: she was set apart from it, and it was malevolent to demand that she should put her soul home. For was not the predicament this, that, should she bring the image of Ippolito, and his life as it was and would be near to her mind and give to it examination and consideration, she must then find herself but as an animal caught in a trap? She was making of herself a goddess with the power to create a substance of love apart from persons and circumstances and independent of all delights: many women have this power of creation, and to confuse or betray that thing they make of love in life may well seem unto themselves to be the unforgivable sin.

Meanwhile I had much anxiety concerning all that was passing in Rome, for even before the coronation it had come to us that Cardinal Ippolito was said to be at odds with the new dispensation. The palazzo San Pietro has ever been a nest of shabby intrigues, and any shifting of personal values known instinctively at once even by the scullions, and I make no doubt that Ippolito, ruffling there in his young arrogance throughout two pontificates, did not lack for ill-wishers of all grades. However that may be, the servitors of the new Pope had been quick to demonstrate that another era had dawned, and the Cardinal de' Medici had suffered two affronts in one morning. The first of these was that one of his gentlemen, the count Ottaviano della Ghiogna, had been arrested by the papal guard for a street brawl in which a man had been killed; and the second was that, when the Cardinal had ridden to San Pietro to make protest, the grooms had seized his mule, they rapacious as all the underlings there ever are, and maintaining that certain dues were owing to them. The outcome of it all had been that in the afternoon of the same day Ippolito had moved the whole of his court to his villa at Tivoli.<sup>9</sup> The lady Vittoria in writing about the matter had observed that the lord Ippolito perhaps deemed his Holiness lacking in gratitude for his efforts in the matter of the conclave, and she foresaw

that the Holy Father would need to exercise much forbearance. Don Gian di Vega, the Spanish envoy had, she said, gone out to the villa as an intermediary, Ippolito had consented to return to Rome for the coronation, and a great company of Roman nobles of the younger generation had ridden out along the via Tiburtina to meet him and escort him to the palazzo Cancelleria. I wondered what hand Ippolito himself had had in this demonstration.

Don Juan de Valdès had asked messer Porrino to be his guest at his dwelling in the city while we were in Naples, and more than once we all rode out together to the villa at Chiaja where don Juan was going to establish himself for the summer months; and it was he who told us that with the new year his Holiness had gone to Magliana for a quiet retreat taking with him the lord Bishop of Capo d' Istria, Monsignor Vergerio. This one was nuncio in Vienna, and had been called to Rome at his own desire to acquaint the Pope with the true state of religion in Germany, he saying that neither of the Pontiffs of the Medici had ever realised the seriousness of all that was passing there. Don Juan observed to us that the matter of a Council was evidently to be Pope Paul's first pre-occupation and he hoped all might soon be regulated.

All my life, at intervals, I had listened to arguments both about these wild theological cries rising beyond the Alps, and about abuse of the usages of Holy Church itself. It had all come to be so much in the air that it was generally forgotten that discussion by lay persons on matters of faith was not permissible, don Juan himself being exiled because in his native Spain the Holy Office displayed a more particular rigorism than here in Italy. The Farnese Pope had too much urbanity to desire to make religion into a discomfort and a stringency, but it could be sensed that much was pent up in men's minds that must forth and no one could foretell whither. Here in Italy, where pride and glory centred round the Primacy of Rome, I could only conceive that the heresies in northern lands must be countered by a great purging of doctrine and order at home, and that the latitude of speech which had grown to be the custom in courts might have to respond to the Church's demand for obedience. As I watched the lady Giulia and don Juan walking to and fro in the garden at Chiaja in the January mornings I could be sure that it was of things which concerned the soul that they spoke together, and I often said to myself that it were far better not,<sup>10</sup> for I saw the position of the duchess Giulia as one of increasing entanglement: the raid of Khiyr-ed-

din had drawn on her the eyes of all the world, and I judged it imprudent that she should make for herself any reputation for interest in matters with which none must tamper but those ordained to authority. It is true that don Juan himself was all transparent goodness, and it would have been wanton to suspect him of apostasy, for he had neither much fervour for the reforms the serious among the Curia called for, nor, I think, much understanding of the vagaries of the man Martin Luther; but messer Porrino, who was one of those with a real interest in religion while himself profoundly sceptical, would laugh in his quiet way when I said this. His thesis was that, when I spoke of the inner light by which don Juan guided his steps, I was all unconsciously saying that conscience alone is orthodox, and this the very cry of Luther himself: and, that when I talked of the Spaniard's spiritual influence over the lady Giulia, I was giving praise that he was trying to persuade her to remove one eye from the contemplation of the Vision of God and to fix it on herself. I never allowed Gandolfo Porrino's cynicism to disturb me, but it gave me an outlook on the currents of thought escaping everywhere to meander hither and thither, and some understanding of the magnitude of the task of the Council of the Church which must shortly direct them again into one general stream.

We returned to Fondi from Ischia in the middle of the lenten fast (1535), and for the festival of Easter the court there assumed much of its old aspect, the younger ladies being recalled to it, and m<sup>rs</sup> Berni, m<sup>rs</sup> Molza and others coming to us from Rome. Monsignor Carnesecchi was with us also for a fortnight on his way to his abbey in Naples: I think that he too was feeling the chill blast of altered conditions<sup>11</sup>, and he was desirous to tell us that Ippolito had set his hand at once to do fitting honour to the two Popes of the Medici who were both now lying in the crypt of San Pietro. Pope Clement had not concerned himself about a tomb for Pope Leo until Baccio Bandinelli had been importunate to be given the commission nine years after the death, and the project had then been to move the body to the choir of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, behind the altar under which S. Caterina of Siena lies. Now it was decided to move both the Popes there,<sup>12</sup> and to set up monuments to face one another. Messer Bandinelli already had his models for the one tomb, but it appeared that Michelagnolo Buonorrotti had come to Rome from Florence, and Ippolito would have him to the palazzo of the Cancelleria to advise on the matter. The outcome of this was that the commission had been given to the Ferrarese sculptor

Alfonso Lombardi, and he already preparing to go to Carrara and choose the marbles.<sup>13</sup>

Monsignor Carnesecchi displayed a greater willingness to discourse on matters such as these than to express his judgments on the trend of events, and it was only Francesco Berni with whom I was able to speak freely, he saying to me that when Ippolito made his haughty exodus from Rome it was not the arrest of his gentleman and his mule alone which had inflamed him, he being already displeased over the affair of Camerino, and much mortified that Pope Paul would not confirm him in the Legation of the Marches to which he had been appointed by Pope Clement<sup>14</sup> just before his death. Moreover he was smarting under strictures from his Holiness concerning Florence.

We were already aware of the imbroglio of Camerino and our interest in it had been kept alive all the winter and spring. When the lord duke Giovanni of Camerino had died in the year of the sack of Rome and his bastard son, Rodolfo, had attempted to seize the duchy, the lord duke of Urbino had sent troops to the aid of the lady Caterina, and since that day his son Guidobaldo and her daughter Giulia had been destined for one another in marriage. Pope Clement had always withheld his consent to this proposed union of the two duchies on the borders of the Papal States, and there had been an attempt by the young lord Matteo Varano, who was in the male succession to Camerino, to abduct the lady Giulia and marry her himself. The child had escaped from the palazzo into the citadel, but the lady Caterina had been taken, had refused to order the castellan to surrender, had commanded him to fire, and had dared her captor to kill her. She had been rescued by the citizens, and the lord Matteo had fled, but it had made her doubly anxious for the della Rovere alliance and protection.

I had once heard her quote Thymocles that opportunity if let slip may not be overtaken by the swiftest bird in the air, and she now caught at opportunity's skirts and held them fast. It was certain that Pope Paul would be as misliking of the Urbino marriage as Pope Clement had been, but the putting forward of the coronation until November gave her over a month to act with none to obstruct her. All the gear had long been in preparation, and although the lady Giulia Varano was but 11 years of age, the arrangements were now pushed on with all speed, and the marriage bond was triumphantly signed in Camerino on the 12th day of October, while the conclave was in progress. Secrecy had

been aimed at, but it had proved impossible to make that effective with many pens put to paper here and there and so much passing to and fro; and the signatures had only been dry on the document for two hours or so, when a courier flung himself from his horse in Camerino with a letter from the Sacred College prohibiting the marriage without the Pope's consent.

Two days later a letter of gentler remonstrance arrived from the new Pope himself, while immediately after the coronation came a brief, forbidding consummation and citing the ladies Caterina and Giulia and the lord Guidobaldo della Rovere to appear in Rome. He, on an understanding with his father, had already taken possession of the duchy, and the summons was ignored.

Knowing the parts of the lady Caterina it seemed unlikely to our small circle in Ischia that she would have entered on a course of contumacy without weighing her chances of success, and as the months went on events revealed that she had behind her not only the state of Venice but the emperor himself. And messer Berni said to me that the Farnese, who in his long life had contrived to be on cordial terms with 6 Pontiffs, was not likely to foment any avoidable occasion of discord with Caesar. The displeasure of the Cardinal de' Medici was of secondary importance he said: throughout the whole affair the lord Ippolito had shown a great indignation that his cousin the lady Caterina Cibo should be harassed and impeded, and all this when he was already affronted over the matter of the Legation of the Marches.

I now heard for the first time in entirety all the scandalous tale of the Cardinal Accolti and how that at last even Pope Clement, who had placed him in Ancona, had been impelled to depose him, and how that he had refused to give up his post: and all this a legacy of trouble for Pope Paul and an affair that would need both decision and acumen.<sup>15</sup> The lord Paolo Cappizucchi had been sent as governor of the March, but the matter of Ippolito's claim to the Legation was left in abeyance.

These discords might soon have been forgotten, but there remained for ever the frenzy of Florence. Francesco Berni had to be won to a particularity about all that was passing, and he made me feel that sorry pinching mists were gathering round Ippolito whose genius had been that of youth and of strange hazards, and whose supremacy had been in detachment and in an arrant disdain. No paths are too dangerous if one walks in them by one's own light, and since I had heard long ago the



crashing of those gates into the via Larga I had had the vision in my imagination of one who rode a black mare with a white fetlock solitary in a sounding adventure. Now the vision was blurred, for others who had been cast forth from their native city later on had crept into it, and uncertain lights flickered and many voices contended around the central figure for whom was thereon a sharpness of loss which could not be advertised. Messer Berni told me that in the last days of March there had been a gathering in the palazzo of the Cancelleria of some hundred of the Florentine exiles, and a discussion which had seemed to be aimless and endless, and had only been brought to a close at a late hour by the nomination of 6 procurators as a formal committee of agitation.

A committee so designated has I suppose no choice but to justify its existence. These 6 agitators assembled themselves in the palazzo of the Strozzi in the following week, and they resolved to send an embassy to the emperor in Spain representing the misery of the city of Florence under the rule of the duke Alessandro, and craving Caesar to restore to it the lord Ippolito de' Medici its wrongfully deposed and legitimate ruler. When I asked Francesco Berni with astonishment if it were not the case that the emperor was now embarking from Spain for an expedition against the Turk who had seized the town of Tunis on the African coast, he replied that this was so, and that in his opinion nothing could well be more ill-timed than this argosy; but the idea had taken root among the exiles that, if persuasion was ever to obtain with the emperor, it must be before he set foot in Naples, and to intercept him before he sailed from Barcelona seemed the only way to gain his ear at all: it was anticipated that he would proceed at once to Naples after he had driven off Khiyr-ed-din, that the duke Alessandro would be summoned there, and that his marriage with the lady Margherita, who was still under the guardianship of the viceroy, would then take place: once Alessandro became the emperor's son-in-law it was realised that, under present conditions in Italy, his position would be well-nigh impregnable.

I recall myself becoming somewhat declamatory, and asking how it was that the Cardinal de' Medici had allowed himself to become the prisoner of this irrational decision which had none of the authority either of comprehension of conditions or of economical action; and when I had for answer that rationality is only a necessity when the quarry is tranquillity of mind, I could but laugh ruefully. But Francesco Berni was grave enough when he said that not only would this importunity be exasperating to the emperor on the eve of a troublesome enterprise, but that it was fantasy to suppose that he would ever allow

the Cardinal to install himself in Florence however unequivocally he had shown a personal preference for him: his main necessity was for peace in Italy where he was now paramount: he must be certain of Florence, and between the lord Ippolito, of whose calibre he had had experience, and the duke Alessandro, who was his creature, there was for him no choice.

The emissaries had left Rome just before msr Berni himself came to Fondi, and he said that they hoped to get a ship either at Porto Pisa or at Genoa. Those chosen to go were the lords Galeotto Giugni, Paolo Soderini and Antonio Berardi, while each of the elder Cardinals of the Medici had sent his own representative and the lord Filippo Strozzi had chosen his son Piero with one of the Pazzi as a companion. Ippolito already had his agent at the Spanish court in the person of messer Cesano, his former secretary, whom the emperor had taken into his service: to Gabriele Cesano Ippolito had addressed a document for the eye of the emperor which msr Berni himself had helped msr Tolomei to draw up: he said it was in the Latin tongue and was of great length, and he shrugged his shoulders over it.<sup>16</sup>

Francesco Berni had evidently found the composition of the appeal a tedious task which he would willingly forget, so that it needed some diplomacy to draw its tenor from him. I suppose I learnt without astonishment that the Cardinal de' Medici had offered himself as a husband for the lady Margherita in the stead of the duke Alessandro, he relating how unwillingly he had accepted the red hat and how willingly he would cast it aside now that Pope Clement was dead. The document pointed out that the duke's marriage would destroy the hopes of the Florentine exiles, and that Ippolito would be unable to prevent them from seeking the help of the king of France. He reminded the emperor that the revolution of the year 1527 was not directed against himself but against the Medici in general, and that in virtue of the treaty of 1530 the government of the city fell of right to him, not only because he was the nearest relative of Lorenzo Il Magnifico, but because he was the chief officer of the state when the opposers forced him to leave the city. He said that the populace had always loved him, and now the principal families—the Pazzi, the Strozzi, the Ridolfi, the Rucellai and the Salviati—all aimed at overthrowing the duke's government: with himself, he announced, would return so many rich emigrants that the city would soon become prosperous as of old, and he foresaw under his rule a golden age when he would not only be able to reduce expenses and lighten taxes, but could offer to the emperor

100,000 scudi. The document had its peroration, said msr Berni, and this exhorted Caesar that if he wished to do justice, to show mercy, to regard honour, to exercise prudence, and to lighten the present stringency, there was one sure way of serving all these ends at once.

There were few in Italy to give heed to the excursion of this handful of Florentines to Barcelona, for both in the north and in the south, as well as at Ostia, armadas had been in preparation all the winter to join the emperor in the assault on Tunis. His Holiness was contributing 22 galleys under the command of the lord Virginio Orsini, the lord Andrea Doria was assembling his fleet in the harbour at Genoa, the viceroy out of his own purse had made ready a galley at Naples, many other nobles had followed his example, and it was known that the knights of San Giovanni would come with 5 caracks from Malta. All these vessels were to assemble in June at Palermo where the emperor was to join them, and when the appointed time came we heard that over 300 sail had made for Tunis.

It all had a particular interest for us in Fondi, because it was directly from his raid on us that the corsair Barbarossa had taken his fleet across to the African coast and had torn Tunis from its king Muley-Hassan; and, when we were in Naples at the Epiphany, the viceroy and others were gallant enough to say that it was to avenge the affront to the lady Giulia that they joined in the crusade. Everyone apprehended that the territory of Tunis with its important harbour, being so near to the island of Sicily, must in any case be regained from the Turk, but we learned that its king, who came of a dynasty ruling there for 300 years and who had fled to the interior, was not a potentate whose restoration would be saluted by his subjects; it was said that his cruelties had been indescribable, and that he had gained the throne only by the expedient of slaying all his kinsmen. He, however, was of little consequence in the end to be gained, and we heard in July that the entrance to the harbour had been forced and the fort of Goletta which commanded it had been taken with the sacrifice of many brave lives; but before further news came of the attack on the city itself we were astounded to learn one morning as we went to Mass that the Cardinal de' Medici with a company of gentlemen had passed through Fondi for Itri in the dawn, he leaving word with the captain Riccaltì that he would be with us in the evening and that he was on his road to join the emperor at Tunis.

Dawn was almost due again before I was free to go to my bed that night. The Cardinal de' Medici, with a train of light-hearted young gentlemen who bore the names of noble families in Florence, had come from Itri with the sunset bringing a flute player and two viols, and there had been an evening of revelry which had made a whirlpool of our quiet waters. I had seen a newly-born lady Giulia, flushed and incoherent with laughter, her waist and hand held by Ippolito as he instructed her in the steps of a dance which he had learned in France. It was named the *lavolta*,<sup>17</sup> and was, he told us, a dance of the country of Provence which had greatly diverted the court circle at Marseilles. It was believable, for the steps were quick and springing and the dancers were in pairs and travelled over the floor. All the gentlemen from Rome were accomplished in it and all the ladies at Fondi more than willing to become so, and for both teachers and taught time was merrily blotted out. The sultry dusk deepened quickly to dark but the heat engendered by the torches was no deterrent to joyousness, and there was the diversity of more accustomed measures, and sometimes cessation of the music and an exodus to the garden to catch the falling stars or to listen to mermaids singing by the lily-pond. The duchess had ordered to be broached a cask of Greek wine which had been the gift of the viceroy, and for those who would, the table in the dining chamber was laid with tarts of sugar and almonds, pine-seed caramels and pots of ginger, and with tazzas piled with grapes and peaches. I dwell on it for, as the torches burned low, the communism of glowing sense engendered and pulsating revealed itself as rationality and the only certitude: for Ippolito and the duchess Giulia something which had never really begun had come perforce to an end in laughter, and with laughter their history was perhaps but just beginning.

Even on my knees at Mass on the morning after, I got no nearer to it than that. When I came forth from the Cathedral I went into the garden, and I saw that Gandolfo Porrino was in the pavilion, already busy with his pen and the table before him strewn with papers. My head ached somewhat and I would have avoided him, but he called to me that he had picked up a jewel which someone had dropped, and I went up the steps and took it from him. He observed that it bid fair to be another day of great heat, and seemed as little inclined for conversation as I myself, but I recollected as I looked at his bended head and watched his moving pen that I had noticed him during the late revels more than once in a doorway engaged with one and another of our visitors; and thus reminded I seated myself on a stool and leaned against

the wall of the pavilion, maintaining silence and marking listlessly that the tips of the acacia leaves were already turning to orange. Then came discomfiture, for m<sup>sr</sup> Porrino asked me presently, without warning, why the lord Cardinal no longer showed me any indications of his goodwill.

It was always impossible to be sure how much the secretary of the duchess knew, and if his integrity matched his discretion. Now and again I had been reminded that behind his bland industry he was a man, and although I had never suspected him of overstepping boundaries in the long hours he spent of necessity alone with the lady Giulia, yet I realised a possessiveness grown up in him, and that a condition of detachment for her was his quiet endeavour: he would be sensitive of anyone approaching her too nearly, and I was startled by his abrupt question, this making me unnecessarily wordy.

I said that it was true the lord Cardinal had hitherto been gracious in his remembrance of my connection with his boyhood, but that I myself had been careful not to presume upon it, for I felt that I was an ageing woman and having neither rank nor wealth must learn to take my place quietly in the ranks of the unconsidered: I could never be perpetual in his life, I continued, and my pride preferred that my elimination should be my own work. This was ungracious dogma, but it had the effect of making m<sup>sr</sup> Gandolfo feel apologetic, so that he lost his own trail and followed mine when I pursued that it could be evident to all that, at this coming, the Medici was gazing over the heads of all, even over that of the lady duchess, and that although he might dally for an evening of pleasure his eyes were fixed only on his goal. I declared that it was very possible that I was wearing a forbidding and censorious air, for I felt the great unreason of what was now forward, and that there were elder men among the Florentine exiles, such as the Strozzi and the Aldobrandini, who ought to have advised against it.

I had achieved making Gandolfo Porrino lay down his pen, and he enjoyed propounding that one must be born reasonable, for if one is not one gets little fruit from the enlightenment of others: and that who has good sense knows much, if, indeed, not all. Then, leaving philosophy, he told me that in the harbour at Gaeta there now lay a galley which had been brought from Naples, and that this was to be made ready for Tunis under the lord Cardinal's own supervising. He said that he saw nothing extravagant in itself in the desire to join in the war on the Turks, and that many young nobles, the lord Filippo de Lannoy<sup>18</sup> among them, had sailed under their own flags already: but of course this

setting forth of the Medici with his Florentine braves was altogether belated as I had but too truly recognised. And msr Porrino went on to adumbrate that had this voyage only been decided earlier on in place of the journey to Barcelona, which he learned had entirely miscarried,<sup>19</sup> then some hope of gaining the emperor's ear might have existed, but to come into the harbour of Tunis when the bombardment was over, and when victory was probably assured on the mainland too, seemed to him as misconceived as well could be. Only one path leads to success, said the talker, with his closed fists laid on the papers in front of him, but there are many that lead to failure, and the lord Cardinal de' Medici seemed to take them all in turn.

But in the golden summer days all this tangle of conception was lost to sight and without meaning. In mortal life the significance of things never has the importance of the expression of things, and to act, to see, to hear, and to put it all into speech or song is what carries the world forward, and man is only as real as the energy with which he serves the end he desires. Ippolito was about to spread sails to fortune authentically as well as in metaphor, and I felt that there was the whole of the manifestation of himself in time and space, and even the idea of himself in God, in the simplicity of the fact of the galley straining on its cords alongside the quay at Gaeta. That seemed to give his act outline and his purport intelligibility: a triumph was implied, for it implied what man wills to be, knowing himself to be complete only when he would be more than man.

To ride as far as Gaeta in the month of July would in the ordinary ways of life have been adjudged an insanity, but the summer heat now seemed to Youth but the warmth and infinite loveliness of the Creator, and there was an undertaking to make the expedition, and a day was fixed for it. After that first evening we had had many merry but fugitive visits from the Cardinal and his companions, for they were each day from Itri to the harbour, and once Ippolito as far as Naples, and we learned that so many had been recruited from this coast already that there was difficulty in finding a crew for the galley or enough slaves for the oars. Apart from these labours of preparation the pursuit of the fowl of the marshes took a toll of the hours, and it had in fact become a world in which woman watches man pursuing his vocation of being man, with only fleeting thought for herself. The realisation of this did not prevent the ladies carrying away the rinds of the melons to their chambers<sup>20</sup>,

and needles were very busy with the adjustment of silks and satins; the while messer Molza sat in the pavilion and wrought at a sonnet to celebrate the enterprise<sup>21</sup> which he was not called upon to share, and the trees by the gateway stooped down over their own dark images.

The lady Giulia had been caught up into the turbulence as into a rhythm that was closer to her than feeling, that was forced on her and compelled her to fall in with it like a passer-by who joins in a dance. She was so blithe that I could believe she was experiencing a conviction that may come in the midst of the most ardent longing like a spring of fresh water appearing in the midst of the sea, and that she was on a sudden sure that she had never desired the improbable and was exulting in a great deliverance. She unfolded and bloomed like a rose, and I reflected that her idiosyncrasy was essentially solitary, and that perhaps she was come to what was entirely herself at last. Yet I would wonder if here were not perhaps some dark trick of nature, working now with sureness for the destruction of these two. It was as if they had let the solemn ghosts of their own elaborated selves go by, and were playing here by the wayside with the abandon and gaiety of a youthfulness neither of them had ever really known in youth. Here was a dawning to which its own crowning must in time be set.

The exhaustion of the ride to Gaeta was alleviated by a setting forth before the sun was too fierce, and by a halt at Itri during the midday hours. Here we clattered on our mules up the steep lane to the convent where the good nuns, apprised of our coming, had a repast ready for us, and in the late afternoon, after we had slept, we were down the hill again to the piazza in front of the monastery where the cavaliers joined us, and so a chattering party along the winding road through the limestone peaks which cast their masses of blue shade on one another's steep sides.

It was sensational to emerge from the mountains on to the bay at Formosa with the dark rock that was Gaeta standing against the sky to the west, and a great sweep of turquoise coast on the south-east curving along an ocean of lapis lazuli. The air had the extreme clarity that sometimes comes before sunset, and very far away, where the land melted into the sea horizon, the islands of Ischia and Procida were to be discerned, and the mountain of Vesuvius with its faint pillar of smoke. We turned away to the right, riding along the shore between fishermen's huts on one side and their brightly painted boats pulled up on the sand on the

other, and a population of both sexes and every age, incredible in its density, made a hubbub that was half good nature and half insolence. So we came to the rock, and under a great archway, with a guard set there, we entered into the gloom of the fortress.

This was a world dwelling apart. Impregnable-looking buildings hemmed us in, and as we passed a grill in a wall with dark faces pressed against it, Mgr Giovio,<sup>22</sup> who was with us from Itri, said that here the slaves for the lord Cardinal's oars were confined until the sailing. The streets were so strait and dark and lifeless that a silence fell on us all; yet it was not far that we must go, and presently, on our left, another archway made a wide frame for the glow and the cheerful activities of a quay, and the flare of a noble galley,<sup>23</sup> all scarlet and white and gold, riding the glittering waters of a sea basin.

It is like the mist upon a hill that the memory of the ensuing hours drifts over me. Ippolito, with his tanned skin and dark, curling hair very vivid above his gossamer vest and the pale sarsenet of his doublet, stood at the top of a narrow bridge of carpeted planks which sloped from the side of the vessel: and I knew I had him there for ever, seeing him clearly for the first time as one to whom the happenings of life had always been differently pregnant, who had always been a little escaped from circumstance beholding it always in unlikeness, and to whom the firm lines of an accustomed world had been indistinct from the beginning. Behind him, between the bare masts of the galley, I glimpsed the zone of the open sea. Lithe and smiling he came down on to the quay, receiving the lady Giulia into his arms as she dismounted, and leading her up the gangway to the deck.

It was asked of us that we should examine the whole of the ship, from the hold where the slaves would sit at the oars, to the cabin Ippolito himself would occupy and for which he had brought silken hangings from Rome: but at last we were called to the supper tables laid on the deck between the guns, and the sun being now dipped behind the rock it was grateful to be seated at them. It was still torrid and no airs stirring, but, as we sat there, long filmy clouds trailed into the sky and Ippolito would have us drink a toast to them, saying that this was the south wind petering out of Africa: then he would have the lady Giulia promise a Mass for the will of God to blow upon him on the day of his going so that his sails might stretch and strain in the trooping of the sea: the stars he declared had not been blinking in quite the same way lately and had convinced him that his legend was to be free from the lets of hindrance at last. Even as he spoke the pale constellations



began to shimmer pensively one by one through the curtain of the twilight.

The grooms brought back the mules presently on to the quay, and there was one provided for Ippolito too, but as he had his foot in the stirrup they came to him with a business which needed his consideration. He would not allow it that we should delay, and we rode without him under the rising moon back along the shore and through the hills, past Itri, and down into Fondi.

It was I think but 2 days later, on the 2nd day of the month of August, that some of the gentlemen came to us at supper-time but without the lord Cardinal, they saying that he was unwell and had a little fever but would undoubtedly be recovered on the morrow. I recall the names of Francesco Corsini, Antonio Berardi, Baccio Popoleschi and the captains Pignatta and Guasconi, among others, all young and buoyant and finding life wonderful, and some of them I could remember as children in Florence. Monsignor Giovio had ridden with them and he reassured us about the Cardinal, recalling to us that he was himself by training a physician, and saying that Ippolito was, not surprisingly, suffering from his over-exertions in the heat. He sat next to me at the supper table and confessed that he was at Itri because he had had to surrender his rooms in the palazzo of S. Pietro, and that he had hoped to contrive a passage to Tunis, now a quarry for the historian of events, but that Ippolito was inflexible to have with him only those who could wield a sword. I told him that m<sup>rs</sup> Molza was in the same case as himself and a little sulky withal.

There was to and fro during the week and we heard with dismay that Ippolito was keeping his bed. It was evident that he had an attack of the miasm of the marshes very prevalent at this season, for he had a remittent ague and some nausea: several of his servants were suffering in the same way. The doctor Stefano Fedrico had been summoned from Naples, but Mgr Giovio sent word more than once that there was no need for anxiety and that among the Brothers were several accustomed to attendance on the sick. But no assurances could still anxiety in two hearts in Fondi, and I think I was prepared for all when, on Sunday, Gandolfo Porrino, creeping into the Cathedral at Mass, touched me on the arm and whispered that the lord Cardinal was gravely worse. I went out with him to the porch, and he told that a groom had ridden with a letter to himself from don Juan de Valdès who had come from

Naples to Itri with the physician. He said that he had commanded mules to be made ready, and I went back into the church and fetched the lady Giulia from her knees.

The heat was weltering as we urged our animals uphill along the unsheltered road, and then down to where Itri lay piled on its mound above its scorched cattle meadows. The stream which ran through them was now scarcely a trickle among the pallid stones, and the air was heavy in the piazza, while thunder muttered among the tall peaks which hemmed in the masterless place. Without any actual sound the excited murmur of a whole population made itself felt, and at our bridles there started up on every side those who would have us know that the lord Cardinal had been poisoned and that his steward was even now under torture in the citadel above. It was in a pressing throng of unknown faces that we dismounted at the monastery door. Within it was the atmosphere of perturbation, and I recall the Reverend Father all volubility and gesticulation as he walked ahead in the corridor beside the lady Giulia: and then coming towards us was the slender figure of don Juan, and his sober carriage and collected manner and speech helped us to a composure too. He would have us taken to a chamber apart and be seated and basins of rose water to be carried to us; and he contrived presently in his own quiet fashion to bring home the tale to us.

It would seem that, two mornings earlier, Ippolito had awaked with the fever abated from a sleep that had come to him after a great sweating. As the hours went on, however, the dry heat had returned to him with the pains in his head and the aching in all his limbs. Towards noon his steward, Giovanni Andrea, had brought a bowl of chicken broth and he had been persuaded to take it, but he had scarcely swallowed it when he was overtaken with a vomiting and had cried out thereat that he had been poisoned and that the duke Alessandro had compassed his death at last. None around the bed had given much heed to this, but it was repeated from one to another, and several of the gentlemen had compelled the podestà to arrest Andrea and confine him in the citadel, and there they had contrived to have him put to the rack, when he confessed that he had poisoned the Cardinal for a grudge he had against him: yet saying directly he was released from the torture that this was not so, and begging for the love of God that the doctors be not persuaded to treat for poison. And the following morning, Ippolito being better, some of the lords went to the citadel to condole with Andrea on his sufferings.

But all yesterday, pursued don Juan, the fever had increased again, and Mgr Giovio having said incautiously that some of the symptoms recalled to him an experiment with the poison of aconite which Pope Clement had made on two criminals in San Angelo, the young lords were again to their cruel work. This time they had forced Andrea to admit that he had poisoned the Cardinal at the instigation of the duke Alessandro, that he had letters and permission from the Signoria, and that Carlo d'Arrezzo had provided him with the poison. The lady Giulia exclaimed at this that confessions extorted by the rack ever seemed to her incredible, and don Juan replied that in this instance he could not but believe that it was so, and that only half an hour before our coming Marco Tempo had arrived from the citadel impressed by Andrea to urge the doctor Fedrico to pay no heed to anything that had been wrung from him but to prescribe for the real illness.<sup>24</sup> Don Juan said that he believed everything possible was being done, but that we must be prepared to see a great change in the lord Cardinal.

I think my first horror when we entered Ippolito's chamber was not for himself, wasted on the pillows, but for the conditions among which he lay. Those standing around the bed drew back when the lady Giulia came forward as if an angel were directing her and knelt beside it, and I made rapid survey, deciding that here was a needless throng and no one authoritative, and that the room must be cleared of all unnecessary persons and some attempt must be made to attain order and a fresher atmosphere. I went back to where messer Porrino was standing outside the doorway, and all his energy and ability were put to proof in the next few hours when he brought our women and everything else I had commanded from Fondi and found for us a lodging adjacent to the monastery. I came again into the chamber pulling my skirt through my girdle, and I suppose every belated man there felt me to be acquittal, and it scarcely needed for me to publish that I had known Ippolito from childhood and this not the first time he had been in my care.

A breath from the ancient room that lies beyond the mirage of the chambers of this life had come to Ippolito: its door was ajar, but he did not cross its threshold on that day nor yet upon the next. The storm gathering in the mountains burst at a distance, but a comparative coolness ensued and before sunset it had been possible to accomplish a little comfort and relief for him. As yet he had made no sign of recognising

our presence, and I wondered if he recognised don Juan, who had crept in with my permission and was standing at the foot of the bed: but presently the Spaniard leaned forward and asked him gently if he would like to see his Confessor, and then the eyes in his now shaven face suddenly lifted and smiled into those of the lady Giulia who was sitting by the bedside. When he spoke his voice was husky, but I was surprised at its strength, and his own self was there, and saying cynically that it would be ill-bred not to be shriven, but that he had come to a place where the night deep down in the soul only asked of God that He remain God and take on no other countenance.

I was urgent with the lady Giulia as we left him that she should seek some rest, and returning with the doctor after the Confessor had gone, I found Ippolito with the dry heat beginning to burn him again: this and other painful symptoms were recurrent, and towards morning he fell into a slumber that was half a stupor. I stood looking down on him, pondering on the earthly mystery of the withdrawal into sleep, and wondering if among its magnificences his soul was concerned with all the gay ardours it must forsake and was remembering the dark joys born of the feast of life. They brought the Host to him next morning, and then a day passed in which there was no time, only the fierce insistent hours.

Monsignor Paolo Giovio has written in his *Elogia Virorum Illustrium* that to the lord Ippolito death was less bitter in that he was near the lady Giulia who ministered to him with all virtuous tenderness: and my feeling about this annunciation is that I can endure a lusty lie but that I hate benevolent inaccuracy.

In the shuttered twilight of what had become a ghostly ante-chamber, the lady Giulia sat by the bedside wielding unwearyingly a fan of plaited grass. The doors were open to induce a little air if possible, and the reflection of the wall of a corridor lighted her white-robed figure rigid on its stool. It belongs to all experience that she was in probability feeling no emotion except that here was the demand to endure what was not endurable, which was so agonising that she must be convinced that it was not really happening at all. She was pale as parchment and quite expressionless. She swung the fan to and fro with her bare forearm.

About an hour before noon Ippolito spoke to her again. I think he believed himself alone with her, and he asked her harshly to make an end between them and to leave him, for he desired to put away the remembrance of his defeated life and not to be held to it by her farewell.

She was inaudible to me as she made him some anguished response, and his words were thereon tumbled, he stressing that he would be at no expense of spirit, would be free of the compulsion of that suspended invisible between them: would be entire and unwasted on his going forth. He turned restlessly from her on the pillow and was presently again in delirium. They gave him Extreme Unction at sunset, but he lived until the next day.

At dawn he spoke to myself. Don Juan had watched with me through the night, and we believed him unconscious, but he suddenly opened his eyes, and, after I had put lemon-water to his lips, he looked up at me and said ANNIBALE. I replied swiftly with a distinct utterance that I would make the child my care, and that with his future the lady duchess of Orleans would of a certainty concern herself. I believe Ippolito heard this with understanding. He lay between us in all the piteousness of extreme exhaustion, and presently when he sought to speak we had to kneel to make certain of his words. We laid each a hand on one of his which were lying outside the sheet, and he gazed from one to the other of us and his black eyelashes flickered, and I knew that he was diverted by our lamenting countenances as we listened to him making irreverent farewell to the goddess Fortune: condoling with her that there would be no more between them, and that she must now make a sport of those who should come after him. The end was some few hours later with all the world kneeling and standing in the chamber. It was the 10th day of the month of August in the year of our Lord 1535: Ippolito being 25 years and 4 months old.

We were to ride back to Fondi that evening after we had followed Ippolito's coffin to the church of the monastery where it was to be watched by the Brothers until dispositions could be made for its transport to Rome. An hour beforehand I crossed the piazza from our temporary lodging and achieved a quiet entry into the death-chamber. I was not to be alone there, but all was peace now with tapers burning and 2 kneeling figures only.

What I had come to look on for the last time had been the appointed hiding place for a spirit with a fiery need of crowns and never need of holiness. Here was the glowing goblet emptied, the heady wine of life spilled out, the *dele* of God's mercy—the issue to be fulfilled.

The mountains had vanished into dark air when we started on our

mules for Fondi, and I felt all the æons of my life behind me blotted out too, and the night in front of me starless.

The funeral procession came through Fondi with the dawn, and all the gentlemen joined it.<sup>25</sup> The lady Giulia was keeping her chamber, wan and lifeless, and knowing, so I believed, that which is more cruel than sorrow: with the consent that he go—which Ippolito had demanded from her—must have come for herself the freedom of a releasing, too, and the power and glory of the unimaginable could never touch her again.

At the dinner hour all tongues were busy because the captain Riccaltì had reported that the steward Giovanni Andrea had passed through Fondi in the custody of the lord del Tunino and 2 men-at-arms, and they for Rome too where Andrea was to be delivered over to the papal authority for examination. At supper time it was known from Itri that the viceroy had sent an escort there to arrest all who had taken part in the torture in the citadel, this being an offence against Neapolitan law and order; at least half a score of the Florentine lords were on the road to Naples together with the notary whom they had impounded to take down the confessions.

Gandolfo Porrino returned a fortnight later, and with him came don Juan de Valdès, travelling back to Naples. They said that a considerable company of nobles and notabilities had ridden out to meet Ippolito's bier, and that from the gate of San Giovanni the body was carried by the Cardinals' Moorish bodyguard: in the streets there had been the usual throng which gathers for any spectacle. In the shadows of the church of San Lorenzo built under the great festal salas of the palazzo of the Cancelleria many of the Cardinals had gathered for the interment and for the Requiem Mass: the two spoke of it all soberly, and it was transparent that it had been an anticlimax. They said that even before they had reached Rome his Holiness had already bestowed on his grandson, Alessandro Farnese, the vacant title of San Lorenzo in Damaso and that he had been sworn as Vice-Chancellor: this one, who was not yet fifteen years of age, had been a member of the Sacred College since the month of May, and already in possession of many rich benefices and bishoprics. Meanwhile Giovanni Andrea had been released from San Angelo after a few days' detention, and a deposition taken from him<sup>26</sup> in which he had related all that had been extorted from him on the rack, and had reiterated that it was all false. None of us put into the awkwardness of

speech the inference that the death of the Cardinal de' Medici was not a chagrin for Pope Paul.

Messer Porrino said that the sale of all the works of art and the library Ippolito had collected in the Roman palazzo had already begun, and a great opportunity for all the cognoscenti, but it was doubted if, even with the sale of the villa at Tivoli, there would be sufficient to pay the debts.<sup>27</sup> The Cardinal Salviati had said that it would not be possible to afford a monument in the chapel, but that there must be some inscription on the wall, and he had consulted Gandolfo Porrino on the matter of its latinity, and this one showed us what had been drawn up. I noted that the age given was wrong but I could make no comment.

HIPPOLYTO MEDICI CARD. S. R. E. VICE CANCELLARIO  
EXIMIIS CORPORIS, AC INGENII, FORTUNEQUE  
MUNERIBUS ORNATISSIMO  
QUI CUM TANTA RARISSIMARŪ VIRTUTŪ INDOLE  
AD LEO. X. CLEMENTISQ. VII. PATRUORUM  
PONTIFICUM GLORIAM CONTENDERET  
ACERBISSIMA MORTE SUBRIPITUR  
ANNO ÆTATIS XXIII, A PARTU VIRGINIS  
M.D. XXXV-III. IDUS AUGUSTI<sup>28</sup>

Francesco Molza, somewhat concerned at this time, I apprehend, about his future, lost no time in the accomplishment of two sonnets in the latin tongue. These, accompanied by a letter of well-turned phrases, travelled down the Appian Way to Fondi, and were sent likewise to the noble ladies who presided at the courts of Mantua and Ferrara, of Urbino and Corregio.

# I

Hippolytum Medica cernis qui gente viator,  
Et juvenem ignota veste nitere vides;  
Cur ostro tectus non sit, si forte requiris,  
Accipe, et hæc placida perlege mente precor.  
Danubii ad ripas his quondam cultibus acrem  
Submovit Turcam finibus Ausoniis,  
Ultima Bactra olim viresque Orientis, et Indum  
In nostrum veheres cum Solimane caput.  
Jure igitur sumtis colitur dux maximus armis,  
Quorum præsidio libera turba sumus.

Ipsū alias decuere sacræ redimicula mitræ  
 Et pressit flavas infula pura comas.  
 Hinc diversa novos dispensant tempora cultus:  
 Tu modo victorem ter veneratus abi.

## 2

Hippolyto Dictynna feras, Ericina lepores,  
 Vertice nata artes, dat Jovis uxor opes.  
 Dat superum pater ipse togam, dat belliger ensem,  
 Quo petat in nostros qui feret arma Deos,  
 Mœnia quo Turcam cingentem Norica flammis  
 Aversum turpi cogat abire fuga.  
 Certatim juveni Dii dant sua dona: salutem  
 Nemo sed affecto, tu nisi Phœbe, dabit.  
 Quin melius vivo vitam des Phœbe perennem,  
 Quam tuus extincto filius ante dedit.  
 Ille suæ placuit soli solo ore novercæ  
 Hic virtute placet regibus ac populis.  
 Hoc facias, Rodani, atque Tagi rogat accola, et Istri,  
 Cujus hic hostili sanguine tinxit aquas.  
 Hoc Roma, hoc Clemens, cui seu petis ardua, seu tu  
 Prona premis, toto par nihil orbe vides.<sup>29</sup>

After some little while had elapsed, messer Molza wrote again, sending a copy of the reply he had received from the lady Veronica Gambarà, and it seemed to speak of a true emotion:

Your letter with the 2 sonnets has made my tears flow anew. As you truly say, the light of this world is dimmed, and I too feel the deepened twilight. And I weep not only with you but with all Rome, and with this hueless century which seems to have lost all there was of worth and radiance.

O graceless death how swift you are to destroy what the years have brought to fruition: he who died was in the fulness of life and deserved to live to eternity.

Weep on. Then reflecting that we have no remedy against death, dry your tears. This universal loss has above all been my loss, and my grief such as I did not imagine I should ever feel again. Yet, because I have already had the experience of the hardest of all the blows of fortune, I must try and believe that I shall not allow this new scathe to defeat me.<sup>30</sup>

Those who can speak of grief with open candour may be envied. For myself the account was now closed, and the words of Philetas alone seemed to express what remained to be said:

Οὐ κλαίω ξείνων σὲ φιλαίτατε· πολλὰ γὰρ ἔγνωσ  
 καλά· κακῶν δ' αὖ σοὶ μοῖραν ἔνειμε θεός.





URBINO



# URBINO

BUT for Cardinal Pietro Bembo, who has come to me under the cover of the darkness in my dwelling in the contrada del Monte in Urbino in this year of our Lord 1546, I should already have brought this narrative to its close. But as we sat by the piled hearth, and as the orange flame-glow danced on the floor and the baffled wind went into a trance in the chimney, I knew that I must seek to capture and cage what I could of our grey-headed rendezvous. And if I am to do that I should labour to record briefly the story of a decade which has brought me strangely near the end of a life which I can never feel has really begun.

The duchess of Trajetto was not unmoved when I told her that I could no longer remain in her service. I think it emphasised for her that an epoch was over and a door shut. Tunis had fallen, Naples was preparing to receive the emperor, and what lay before her was the necessity to assume her position in the court there as a feudal princess. Moreover she knew that the hand of her step-daughter was talked of for the prince of Sulmona and that she must give her countenance to all of that. Even as I left Fondi the lady Isabella came there from Pagliano, and the 2 ladies were established before long in fitting state in the Neapolitan palazzo in the Borgo delle Vergini.

I have learned of them from time to time during these passing years. The projected marriage took place before the next Lent (1536) in the presence of the emperor, who gave the bride the castello of Caramanico in the Abruzzi as a dowry. She has borne her husband several children. In accordance with the provisions of the lord Luigi's testament she was obliged on re-marriage to relinquish the guardianship of the boy Vespasiano, who was sent to his grandfather the lord Ludovico Gonzaga at Gazzuolo, this one coming out from his monastic life to take up the charge. As soon as her nephew had gone the lady Giulia made a residence of the convent of San Francesco delle Monache, she obtaining from his Holiness a brief to enable her to live there as a secular person: but Gandolfo Porrino wrote that she was retaining a household in the palazzo and was to and fro almost daily to transact all the business of the

estates. In the year 1540 the lord Ludovico, her father, died, making her guardian of Vespasiano his heir, and she won the suit which the lady Isabella at once brought against her. The boy came from Gazzuolo to live with her, and she thereon resumed the ritual of life in the Borgo delle Vergini. For five years he made a pivot for her existence, but in this year when I write, Vespasiano, being now 13 years old, has been appointed a page to the emperor's son the lord Filippo of Spain, and has sailed for Barcelona, the lord Andrea Doria providing 2 galleys for the voyage.<sup>1</sup> The matter of a marriage for her nephew is said to be occupying the lady Giulia's thoughts.

It is difficult to remember that the duchess is now 32 years of age. She has known a great sorrow in the death 3 years ago of don Juan de Valdès. Notable churchmen, and many noble ladies as well as herself, had made a circle in Naples of which he was the oracle, and which went by the name of the Spirituali. I had always recognised in him that irrepressible desire to share spiritual experience which is the genius of the inspired teacher,<sup>2</sup> and, having been myself in part under the spell he exercised, I could never smile, as others sometimes did, when the gatherings in the garden of the villa at Chiaja were spoken of. I judge such raillery to be always somewhat vitiating, but I would also make confession that I find little profit for myself in any great entanglement of words over matters which concern the soul, and that when I obtained from Venice some two years ago the book called *Il Beneficio della Morte di Cristo*,<sup>3</sup> which was said to give don Juan's teaching in a form which even the weak and ignorant could understand, I found myself baffled and unedified.

Don Juan, who had shared with me the vigil of Ippolito's last night on earth, had been brought very near to my consciousness. He was not one of those willing to advise in practical affairs, and moreover he was not an Italian, nor with real understanding of the imbroglio of the Medici family: but because there was no one at all at Fondi with whom I could take counsel concerning the boy Annibale, I had found myself expounding my perplexities to him on one of the 3 days that he was there after the funeral, and, with that exposition, confirming myself in a conclusion that it were better on all counts to take the child to my native Urbino and to bring him up there. I had charged messer Porrino when he went to Rome to discover if his mother would make a difficulty about giving him up to me, and he had been vivacious on the topic that

she would not, and that she had already found another protector. Don Juan had listened to all I said with patient courtesy and a show of interest, and because of the grace that was in him I was fortified; but I have too much sapience to have remained permanently convinced that he thought the destiny of an elderly woman and a bastard child of much importance.

It seemed witless to suppose that any one of the Cardinals related to the Medici would be inclined to furnish means towards the upbringing of Ippolito's misbegotten son, and, apart from the pertinence of separating him from his mother, I knew that the cost of lodging and of all else in Rome would be beyond mine own purse. Florence, too, was impossible, for not only would expenses there have been nigh as heavy, but it would have been rash to bring Annibale within the duke Alessandro's reach. I had exemplar in the lady Maria Salviati who had withdrawn the boy Cosimo de' Medici to the fortress-castello of Trebbio where his father's boyhood had been passed, and where she was giving him what education was available there for her straitened fortune: moreover, when I weighed the matter of Florence I had to remember that I myself bore the name of Strozzi, and that the lord Filippo and all his family were exile from it, having now their location in Venice.

Because of the unforeseen which has come to pass, Florence would be poignantly out of the question today. In the year 1536 the Florentine nobles had thronged to Naples when the emperor came there from Tunis, and the lords Filippo Parenti and Jacobo Nardi, as their spokesmen, had made passionate representation of the misery of their native city under Alessandro. It had been quite unavailing: after the emperor's long anticipated sojourn in Rome, he went northwards to Florence, and, 3 weeks after he left the city for Genoa to return to Spain, the lady Margherita, his daughter, arrived there and her nuptials with the duke took place. Seven months later Alessandro was murdered by Lorenzino de' Medici, not too short-witted to desire to save his sister Laudomia from dishonour: this one escaping with his accomplice to Venice, although he was the next in legitimate succession to the Medici honours, and, if possessed of any acumen, might have seized the reins of power.

He who actually seized them was the youth Cosimo, come to the age of 18 years, and silent and imperturbable as he had been from childhood. The council of 40 had realised that the emperor would not tolerate the restoration of the Republic, and there was a bastard of Alessandro's, named Giulio, who was still an infant and whose nomination, so it was suggested, would give a manner of freedom; but while this was

under discussion, and no one ready to take a bold line, Cosimo himself rode down into the city from Trebbio and with impervious bearing pronounced himself as heir to the honours of the Medici. That none ought to gainsay him was testimony of all that had passed of humiliation since the siege, and now, ten years later, he has captured Siena and is duke of all Tuscany.

An imperial bull had, at the onset, made his position secure, and it was his good fortune that those most dangerous to him should without delay be given into his hand. The exiles had seen a favourable opportunity in this accidental exchange of one Medici for another, and their ranks had been swollen by many recruits, and notably by the lord Baccio Valori, who had been deprived of the governorship of Romagna by the new Pope: with money provided by the king of France and by the lord Filippo Strozzi, a considerable force was got together, and it was joined by most of the Florentine students in the universities of Bologna and Padua: it came down from the Apennines and entrenched itself in the castello of Montemurlo between Pistoia and Prato. This citadel is in a strong natural situation, but the fortifications were weak, and the lord Cosimo seems to have acted with decision and promptitude and to have taken it without difficulty, for it was said that the large garrison which the duke Alessandro had maintained in Florence served under him with great enthusiasm as the son of the leader of the Black Bands. When the duke returned to Florence he had as his prisoners the lords Filippo Strozzi and Baccio Valori and representatives of nearly every old and noble family in the city. If any escaped their inevitable fate I know not. The lord Filippo himself was not publicly executed but was found dead in his cell in the fortress in the following year.

I have no knowledge if Alessandro's bastard has been allowed to live, but I have never doubted that for Ippolito's son the obscurity of a home in a street in Urbino has been prudent. I saw of course that for the sake of a future career for him it would not be well to conceal his identity completely, and through the Strozzi bank in Lyons (now in the hands of Roberto Strozzi) I was able to get a letter conveyed to the lady duchess of Orleans telling her of his existence and whither I proposed to convey him: when I had established myself here I wrote to Monsignor Bembo as well. Both, without committing themselves further, replied that I was doing well.

In Urbino itself Annibale is accepted without overmuch of comment

or curiosity. Of my family and of mine own generation only two are living, and they occupied with their own lives in their own homes on the borders of the duchy, while to those younger I am but the shadow of a shadow. I was able to secure at my coming a narrow dwelling in the steep contrada del Monte, nearly opposite the casa Sanzi, and, although it was over a year before an opportunity could be found to convey them here, I have some of the furnishings of my home in the Canale di Ponte in Rome; these include the cabinet inset with ivory and lapis lazuli and agate which was the gift of the lady Clarice to my husband on our marriage, and hangings which are mine own handiwork. I have taken into my service a woman slightly deformed, whose mother I used to know about the palazzo in the days of the duchess Elisabetta, and, although living in such a small way, I have contrived to give Annibale the surroundings and ritual of the gentle life. The matter of tuition for him would have been more difficult, but that the lady Caterina Cibo has lent her aid. A tutor has been thus a possibility.

Court life in Urbino did not exist when I first returned here. The duke Francesco Maria had gone to Naples to commend himself to the emperor, and the duchess Leonora was established in the villa Imperiale which she had built for herself overlooking the sea at Pesaro. She lived a quiet life there with her young daughters and her infant son, born 3 years previously at Mantua; while the lord Guidobaldo, the heir, and his wife were resident in Camerino. Then returning from Naples the lord duke took up his duties as captain-general of the League and was wholly occupied in the matter of the great confederation against the Turk in which the Pope and the emperor had joined hands. Finally, in the year of our Lord 1538 he was very ill in Venice after his return from an inspection of defences in Dalmatia, and fearing the worst he went by sea to Pesaro and died there a fortnight later.

It was reported that when the sultan Suleyman heard of the duke's death he ordered a day of public rejoicing, for it was realised by all that his son and successor would never be a leader of armies in the field. His Holiness, too, was aware that on this account Urbino would no longer be of military use either to the emperor or to the state of Venice, and he sent troops at once to demand Camerino. The duke Guidobaldo was inclined to resist, but looking around on affairs in Italy he resolved that prudence lay in consolidating his own dukedom, and he accepted golden scudi as a compensation for his wife's inheritance. For this the lady Caterina Cibo will never forgive him: she is living now in her native Florence, and her palazzo there a centre of religious activities. His



Holiness has bestowed Camerino on his grandson the lord Ottavio Farnese, to whom the emperor has also given the widowed lady Margherita de' Medici as wife. These matters are to me as phantasms only.

The duke Guidobaldo and the lady Giulia Varano now dwell for the greater part of the year in the palazzo here where an heir was born to them 2 years ago. Since the death of the duchess-mother, Leonora, at Gubbio, the duke's sisters, the ladies Giulia and Elisabetta, and his younger brother Giulio are with them. It is a diminished and a lifeless court, and all its remembered brilliance as a candle blown out long, long ago. Once on a time is every man's story; and mayhap if I could find myself at the heart of it again it would only be to authenticate that we were all mad with the vainglorious fear of our own nothingness.

It is since Annibale left me for the university of Padua that I have put together this narrative in the long days when I have slipped the noose we call care and know the immortality of being alone without fret. Annibale will be to and fro at intervals for a year or so, but his life is already loosed from mine, in that, when his studies at Padua are over, it is fixed that he shall leave Italy and enter the French service under the captaincy of Piero Strozzi who is established at the French court.<sup>4</sup> The lady Caterina de' Medici duchess of Orleans is now become dauphiness, and in due time will be the queen of France, and her patronage is the solution of Annibale's future which I have always anticipated. Youth always reverences definite states as ideals, and he already beholds himself as a famous soldier and is impatient of his straitened boyhood and my ambiguous authority. New worlds are hidden in each heart and each must discover for himself that land is only earth.

All this had not been without the cognisance of the Pietro Bembo with whom I rode out and danced with under the torches in the Urbino yesterdays that belong to dreams. Morosina died a year after the death of Pope Clement, and the lady Caterina Cibo wrote to me, with some money she had taken an opportunity to send for Annibale, that many wondered if he would now receive the red hat. At first it seemed as if it would not be so. Pope Paul at the outset had proclaimed that a thorough reform of the Curia must come before any Council of the Church, and although almost his first act had been to bestow the purple on his two young grandsons, he had covered this indiscretion by the creation in the following year of 6 Cardinals all distinguished for their

religious earnestness, and later on there were 9 further elections of virtuous men convinced of the necessity of reform: among these being Monsignor Sadoletto and the Englishman, Monsignor Pole, who was his closest friend. As time went on, however, the emperor and the king of France and the state of Venice all had to be considered, and it was on this last count, and in his 70th year, that my friend of so long standing became the lord Cardinal Bembo and took Deacon's and Priest's Orders. Because of the new seriousness abroad there were many strictures on this; but, contrariwise, the Pope in honouring him won the goodwill of all the humanists in Europe, and even among the Lutherans. I could not but feel that this rank and dignity were a consummation for Pietro Bembo, for in old age glory is the only cloak which disguises the loss of the capacities that life has exhausted. Presently he was made lord Bishop of Gubbio and he took up his residence there.

It is the librarian, Niccolò Agibito, who alone in this place seems to link the dream which is the past with that other dream, the present. I had learnt that he was still alive, and one day after my return to Urbino I ventured to enter the door of the library in the outer court of the palazzo and to make myself known to him. He did not recognise me, but pretended to recall me at last. He himself was now an ancient, but distinguishable for his oddity of height and countenance anywhere, and still prone to dissertation, and he made me free of the premises saying that none came there nowadays: so it is that I occasionally visit the remembered sanctuary: and to invoke the anecdotal mood I will often ask for fresh sight of the history, all in script, of the duke Federigo which Girolamo Muzio compiled, and that later one of the lord Francesco della Rovere by Giovanni Leone.<sup>5</sup> Msr Agibito is ever willing to lay them on the tarsia table in the inner room, and leaning to gaze at the medallions which decorate them, he will let slip a flood of memories as variously coloured as the miniature scenes themselves. Would he but take a pen in his hand and consign to paper what is stored in his recollection, there might be for the world a picture of the ducal court more adequate, because more diversified in aspect, than that of the lord Baldassare Castiglione. It would however be impossible to persuade him to such a task, for he deems *Il Cortegiano* to be tribute to our mortal existence not to be surpassed, and is unmoved when I pronounce beauty and urbanity to be not all, and that the volume leaves the secret of time unspoken. I can but reflect that that which the painter has often

miraculously pinned on canvas with his brush has found in my judgment (such as it is) no utterance in this our time in other of the arts. And for an instance, the portrait of the duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga which Raffaello Sanzi painted speaks of her far more truly than anything that has been said about her with the pen. Because of his relish for the periods of the latin tongue msr Agibito will not seldom bring forth and read aloud to me the tract that Pietro Bembo composed after the death of the duke Guidobaldo, and for the ostensible edification of his father who would have considered the vernacular an ill compliment. Some ten years ago it was given to the printer and to the public,<sup>6</sup> and in its pages the lord Pietro has sought to sustain the honour of himself and others and has placed on record what it was to the credit of each and all to say in eulogy of their patrons. The resonance of the Bembo latinity is pleasant to the ear, and it is now a fortnight gone that I last sat listening to it—and not without a smile for the remembrance of the shabby behaviour of these same gentlemen to the duchess Elisabetta in Rome. When he had satisfied his own need for delivery, msr Agibito put aside the pamphlet, saying that it had come to his ears that the lord Cardinal Bembo had now abandoned all composition in the vulgar tongue and was wholly given over at Gubbio to the study of the Fathers of the Church. And then he told me, as a matter (to himself) of secondary import, that the Cardinal was arrived in Urbino on the evening before as the guest of the lord duke, he travelling to Venice on some affair connected with his kindred, and coming in no state with a party of 5 or 6 only. I realised that the lord Cardinal had been neither concerned to let me know of this privately, nor had he asked the duchess that I be summoned to an audience: but the strength of those who walk crownless is that they are without the unrest of anticipating courtesies, and so acquire a composure about all the tricks of humanity. It was very cold in the library, but I found that, as usual, it was not easy to take my leave once I was ensconced there.

A gale was chanting among the buildings as I came out into the cortile at last, and I struggled to the upper ramparts, for I know the winds in these days as my companions, implacable as myself. As I stood there in the brown winter twilight they swept over the dark land between the sheer of the walls and the dim mountain ranges with airs of immemorial right, and bringing to me as ever the brooding sense of a universe where man is an interloper still and where his spirit should keep silence. Yet the acceptance of such silence does not bespeak the peace of joy: and this I knew to be my predicament as I went along the

rampart to the top of the contrada del Monte and down its paved steep to my home, pausing when I reached my door to observe an old man who was coming up the hill from the market place. As he peered at the houses his cloak fell away from his face, and, notwithstanding the dusk, and his white beard, and the lay dress and the unexpectedness, I knew that here was Pietro Bembo. I spoke to him, telling him who I was.

Inside my house I called to Joanna and would have her light us up the stairs and kindle the hearth and the tapers, while I withdrew to get rid of my cloak and to don quickly a robe of damson-coloured damask, and velvet shoes, and to put a cap of silver braid sewn with garnets over my faded hair. When I returned to the sala the Cardinal had drawn a chair near to the crackling wood, and I seated myself on the other side of the hearth, hoping, but of a certainty in vain, that what I revealed of time's defeat would be found written in spoils of grace. Ever-living is but ever-hurrying to a youth older than time: yet it is not possible to excuse its faithlessness to the unwithering which is its essence.

Who does not consider herself unfortunate is fortunate, and I have never allowed either my poverty or my isolation to come upon me keenly, keeping consciousness of them at bay by diligently shutting out the morrow. Perhaps I have aspired to make them into a quality with a value of their own, and to deny that friendship, wealth, and reputation added to family life are the only elements of well-being. But it is inexorable that social needs are fundamental, and this flooded in on me during those next two hours of companionship by the fireside, and when they were over I knew all of pure aloneness at last and can almost wish that they had never been.

It is true enough that in the company of numbers the soul becomes less worthy of itself, but what makes the world valuable is that from it may be plucked the society of one other mind, and that two may sit withdrawn, looking on at the festival and exchanging private virtues. This is the flower of the associations of the world, and ever since the evening, 40 years ago at Fossombrone, when I had found my laughter beyond control as I danced with the newly arrived guest from Venice, Pietro Bembo and I had been at ease with one another. It needed but for him to say that I must forget his beard of 10 years' growth and only remember that his nose was as long as ever, and we were back across the years on our old terms of sardonic intimacy.

He had written to me at the time of Ippolito's death, and I to him on the death of Morosina, and he had advised me later about Padua, so that, after disposing of the subject of Annibale, it only remained to enquire after the welfare of his own son and daughter. He told me that his surviving son, Torquato, had now taken Priest's Orders and was a Canon of Padua, and that he had married his daughter Helena 3 years ago into the noble Venetian family of Gradenigo. I asked him if this marriage was to be counted fortunate, and with his old incisiveness he replied that I, who had twice been entangled in its bonds, must know that there was that in the holy estate which for ever doomed it to failure—a nascent distrust: and he demanded of me if I could recall the which it was of the ancient writers who had said that. This was the old Pietro, the quidnunc of the Urbino court, and I was quick to rejoin that all I could recall was the rumour which had reached me that he had deserted the humanities for theology.

He gave me a keen glance at this, and fell on a short silence: then saying without unction that theology was thought marshalled for the chase of the Eternal, and that all his own unrighteous self had been engaged in was the attempt to make Homer and Plato talk agreeably to Moses, and he quoted Marsilio, who had written, *Gratiae et Musae a Deo sunt atque ad Deum referendae*. His gibe at himself was half meant, for he recognised that his intellect had never been driven out into the depths where man shudders but comes face to face with the Living God, and that the path his mind had knowingly chosen was not all there is of achievement. But there had always been a tacit pledge between us that we should be moderate with one another and never reach to the heart's core, and we shared, I know, the sense of the insignificance of the emotional. It sufficed to confess to one another that in our lives, now irrecoverable, most of our virtues had been without any consequence: declining to be drowned in our own shadows we exercised rather our prerogative to pass judgment on what had been before our eyes the while we had lived.

Pietro Bembo had always been skilled in the adroit use of words, and there was artistry in his picture of the whirl of confusion that had been around Pope Leo, and of the Rome of Pope Clement filled with leaden vapours. He mused on, with a hand holding his beard and his eyes on the flames, saying that his withdrawal of long ago from Rome to Padua had given him a freedom like to the freedom of death, for it relieved him of the responsibility of a world he did not use: and yet, so he continued, when he first knew Rome her arrogance had been a great

inspiration, and while her evil had been more evil than the evil anywhere else, yet it had been a challenge to reckon well one's own power to sin: and a society that passed no moral verdicts, but was alert to apply the tests of intellectual capacity, and prompt to confer a stigma of dullness, could not fail to be stimulating. But out of it all, he wound up unexpectedly, what he had really brought away as memory was something quite concrete and simple, and this was the picture of white bullocks pacing the towing paths of the Tiber and drawing the laden barges slowly along in the crystal air under a vault of flawless blue.

He was neither very forthcoming nor very concise when I questioned him about the Rome of the Farnese Pope, he saying that he was too old now to find a place for himself among new conditions, and that he had not been sorry of the opportunity to make his abode at Gubbio, uncouth as life there was.<sup>7</sup> He told how that in these last few years the tangle of negotiations respecting the Council of the Church had been unbelievable, the emperor and the king of France having gone to war with one another and the Pope refusing to move from his neutrality: moreover the schism of the Protestants in Germany had been complete since the Diet held at Ratisbon 4 years ago (1541). Just before Christmas (1545) the Council had at last started on its first session in the town of Trent in the Tirol, and its task to make new foundations and new apologetics for the Church of the future. He lifted his eyebrows and smiled at me.

I questioned him about Rome itself and conditions there, and he said that the increase in the population and its returning prosperity were quite evident, and the revival of the carnival and of the splendours and festivities of the palazzo of San Pietro gave gratification to all. On the other hand there had been a revival of religious activities too, these revolving around a Spanish priest, Ignatius of Loyala, who had come to Rome with a band of followers from a sojourn first in Paris and then in Venice. They had desired to establish themselves as an Order, and the Pope had confirmed them after a great deal of discussion and opposition, and had given them the little church of Santa Maria della Strada near the foot of the Capitol.<sup>8</sup> They were constant in good works among Jews and prostitutes and the dying in the hospitals, and furthermore in the instruction of the younger among the priesthood and the candidates for Orders. I observed that there was nothing very novel in any of this for the Oratory of Divine Love and the Theatines had both had these things at heart; and Cardinal Bembo agreed, saying that it was merely a new religious eruption, and these healthy and inevitable from time to

time: he added that this new Order of Gésu was full of zeal for strictness of doctrine, and that Ignatius, coming from a land where the Holy Office was diligent, had persuaded his Holiness that in Italy the watchmen on the roofs of Zion were asleep. Pietro Bembo then said that he had not been invited to take part in any of the drawn-out consultams about the Council, and he had neither been appointed as a member of it nor as a member of the new board of the Inquisition,<sup>9</sup> and the instinct that left him outside these newly-born cabals was a just one. But, he added, that which we call dying is but ceasing to be needful, and I could but reply that one gets used to being dead.

We laughed a little ruefully at one another and at these melancholy sallies, and I recollected that when I left Fondi the lady Giulia had brought me with her own hands to pack among my gear a bottle of her prized Tokay wine out of Hungary. I had wondered if the rare hour worthy of it would ever strike in my depleted existence, and now resolved that there would be none again rarer than this. So I had Joanna bring it with goblets of Murano glass, and pile the hearth anew, and presently we were in agreement that age had quite healed us of youth's delusion that things are less beautiful, desirable and manifold than they really are: and that a long and sound experience of disappointments and calamities gives the serene candour of the finer life.

Cardinal Bembo was on his feet in farewell at last, and all too soon. I helped him with his cloak and lighted the lantern he had brought with him. He held my hands and kissed the one and the other, but I anticipated of course that he would desire the courtesy of my cheek no longer. He was a Prince of the Church and it was fitting that I should accompany him to the threshold. The street was in darkness but for the dim illumination of a lighted window here and there, but the wind had dropped and it was a clear night of stars. I watched the shrouded figure making its uncertain way down the hill, and I came into my narrow house and shut its door behind me.

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# NOTES





# NOTES

## URBINO

1. Cardinal d'Amboise, who was a great collector of works of art, died at Lyons in 1510, and Göbel's *Wandteppiche*, Vol. II, p. 414 gives what is known about these tapestries, and gives references to the literature on the subject. According to an inventory of 1630 there were a set of six Troy tapestries at Urbino at that date, but it is doubtful if they were part of the famous set which Cesare Borgia took away.

The two marble figures commandeered by Isabella d'Este were an antique torso of Venus, and the reproduction of a sleeping Cupid by Michelangelo. In 1632, after the debacle at Mantua, they were among the many purchases made for Charles I by his agent Daniel Nys. After the sale of King Charles' collection in 1651 there is no certain reference anywhere to either of the figures. There are no details given in the Harleian MS No. 4898, which mentions several antique statues of Venus and at least seven sleeping figures of Cupid that were brought from Whitehall to Greenwich.

2. The Montefeltro library is today in the Vatican. The story of its removal to Rome in a later century is told in Mr James Dennistoun's *History of the Dukes of Urbino* (Longmans, 1851).

3. Paulo Aldo, son of the founder of the Venetian firm, gave the MS of *Il Cortegiano* to Jean Grolier, who was treasurer to the French king at Milan, was a great collector, and a liberal supporter of the Aldine Press. Aldo wrote 'Per Mons<sup>r</sup> Grolier Thesorer' on the first page of the manuscript, and Grolier had it bound in green morocco with gold tooling. At the dispersal of the Grolier library in 1678, the MS was purchased for the library of Carpentras, and from here it was stolen by the government inspector Guglielmo Libri, and was acquired by Lord Ashburnham in 1842. The Laurentian Library in Florence bought it from him in 1884. The whole of the MS with its many revisions is in Baldassare Castiglione's beautiful handwriting.

4. The mother of Vittoria Colonna was Agnese de' Montefeltro, daughter of the Duke Federigo of Urbino, and Vittoria must inevitably have known the court of her cousins although there is no record of her presence there.

5. The translation of the 'Courtier' is that of Sir Thomas Hoby made in 1552-4. The spelling is modernized. Sir Thomas was the son of Wm. Hoby of Leominster and half-brother of Sir Philip Hoby, English Ambassador to Charles V. He travelled in Italy and lived for some time in Rome. In 1558 he married a daughter of Sir Anthony Cook. In 1566 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth, sent as English Ambassador to Paris, and died the same year. His body was brought to England and he is buried in Bisham Church.

6. The authorities now pronounce that the two portraits of the Duke Guidobaldo and the Duchess Elisabetta of Urbino in the Uffizi gallery in Florence, and which have been attributed at different times to different artists, are both early works of Raphael.

7. Magnifico was a customary title for small Italian potentates who owed their position to their own efforts apart from royal favour.

8. Bishop Stubbs, in his *Lectures on European History*, says: "Sicily had, since the 13th century, belonged to the royal House of Aragon, whilst Naples had been held by princes of the two lines of Anjou, French in origin and by alliance. In the middle of the 15th century, Alfonso of Aragon had got possession of the mainland as well as of the island, and henceforth the Angevin kings, of whom René, father of our Queen Margaret of Anjou, is the best known to us, had been titular only. Alfonso had left Naples to an illegitimate son: Sicily and Aragon going to his brother, John, father of Ferdinand the Catholic. The illegitimate dynasty was ruined by Charles VIII's invasion of Italy, one object of which was to vindicate his right to Naples, as testamentary heir of the Angevin

line of kings: but the French influence was short-lived: Ferdinand of Aragon stepped in and ousted both competitors, proclaimed himself the successor of his uncle Alfonso, and, supported by the victories of Gonzalvo of Cordova, maintained himself from 1501 onwards in Naples, and left the kingdom to his grandson Charles in 1516. From the date of Ferdinand's conquest, Naples was governed by Viceroy.

9. Eleven sonnets by Giuliano de' Medici are in the National Archives in Florence. They are as tedious to modern taste as nearly every other sonnet of the period.

10. Henry VII was always at pains to establish friendly relations in Italy as a check on France, and if his policy bore little fruit it was not for want of intelligent watching of affairs there, and he was always admirably informed by his agents who were everywhere.

11. *St George and the Dragon* of Raphael. This picture is in the inventories of both Henry VIII and Charles I. It was sold at the Commonwealth to Lord Pembroke for £150, and was afterwards in the gallery of the Marquis de Sourdis in Paris, in the possession of M. de la Nöne who paid 500 pistoles for it, and in the Crozat Collection in which it is engraved, and from which it was bought by the Empress Catherine of Russia. It was in the Hermitage at St Petersburg before the Revolution of 1916. A search by Sir Esmond Ovey in the Hermitage in October 1932 did not discover it, and it has just (1937) been revealed that it is in the Mellon collection in Washington. It is only  $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$  inches and has been greatly injured by 'restoration'. Originally on wood, it is now on canvas. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* confuses it with an earlier *St George* which is in the Louvre.

12. As the *Cambridge Modern History* says, the restoration of Greek letters in Italy preceded the fall of the Eastern Empire, and was not, as has sometimes been supposed, a result of emigrations caused by that event. The Greeks who chiefly effected the revival were drawn westward by the demand for teachers which offered them distinguished and lucrative careers. Theodorus Gaza, arriving in Italy about 1430, taught Greek for some nine years at Ferrara (1441-50) and afterwards settled at Rome. His Greek grammar was already a classic when printed by Aldus in 1495. The Greek grammar of Constantius published *Mediolani*, fol. 1480, was printed by Aldus in the same year, and was actually the first essay of the Aldine Press.

13. Erasmus, always anxious to go to Italy, but unable to afford it, owed the accomplishment of his ambition to the influence of certain friends in England. The two sons of Boerio, the Genoese physician of Henry VII, were returning home, and Erasmus, then in Paris, was appointed their tutor. He was enabled to take his doctor's degree at Turin, and then proceeded with his pupils to the University at Bologna.

14. The Greek testament of Erasmus was pushed through the press at Fröben in 1514 in order to anticipate the Complutensian Polyglot of Cardinal Ximenes. Not only is the Erasmian text, like those of scholars of long afterwards, printed from single authorities without any comparison of manuscripts, but it is carelessly edited and full of printer's errors. Nevertheless it was an epoch-making book. It was cheap and convenient and 100,000 copies were sold in France alone, and to the later editions were added 'Notes', which were not satirical nor controversial, but were deliberate accusations attached to the text, and contrasting the teaching of Christ with the superstition which had taken its place. Ritual, ceremony, dogmatic theology and personal character were all arraigned.

15. In 716, and with the help of documents brought from Italy, the monks of Jarrow and Wearmouth produced a version of what, since the time of Roger Bacon, has been called the Vulgate, and sent it as a present to Pope Gregory II. It is known as the *Codex Amiatinus* and is now in the Laurentian Library.

16. The view of Monte Catria from the dining rooms in the palace of Urbino as described in *Il Cortegiano* is now blocked by a factory.

17. In February, 1508, the Emperor Maximilian issued a proclamation from Trent to the effect that he would use the title of Emperor Elect until such time as he received the crown in Rome: and this was formally authorised by Julius II. This served as a precedent to his successors, and during the next three centuries his grandson Charles V was the only Emperor who took the trouble to receive his crown from the Pope.

18. Margherita Gonzaga was the illegitimate daughter of Gianfrancesco Marquis of Mantua. She had many suitors and among them the immensely wealthy Siene banker Agnostino Chigi.

19. This is a somewhat free rendering of Pindar's Nemean Ode iv, line 4. It has been more precisely translated by Mr L. R. Farnell.

20. Horace, Book iv, Ode 2.

21. This palace on the Corso belonged to the Chapter of Santa Maria Maggiore, and the Cardinal Santorio acquired it from them and rebuilt and enlarged it. Julius II saw it, and, saying that it was too palatial for a Cardinal, enforced his opinion by taking it from its owner and giving it to his nephew. A century later the palace was bought from the Duke of Urbino by the Florentine family of Aldobrandini and passed from them by inheritance to the family of Doria Pamfili. It was rebuilt late in the seventeenth century and has been added to several times since then. It is said to contain over a thousand rooms. As the Palazzo Doria it is well known for its picture gallery and its immense frontage on the Corso.

22. Document of the Pleading, No. 924, of Urbino MSS in Vatican.

23. The translation of Landucci's Diary is the well-known one of Miss de Rosen Jervis.

24. The parentage of Alessandro de' Medici will always be a matter for controversy. It was the conviction of the time that he was the son of Clement VII, and although the habit of the Italian, to the present day, is to be gaily scandalous about the priesthood, the belief does seem to be given warrant by Clement's determination to establish Alessandro in Florence, and by the fact that his deathbed pre-occupation was Alessandro's stability there. Herr von Pastor adopts the view that Alessandro was the son of Lorenzo de' Medici II, but gives no reasons for his opinion, and, impartial as he is in general outlook, it is impossible to forget that he writes from the Roman standpoint, and, of two theories, would prefer that which exonerated the Pope. Recent Italian writers have upheld this thesis that Lorenzo was the father, but it must be kept in mind that the censorship of every class of book in Italy at present (1936) is so rigorous and meticulous that even what comes from scholarly pens is vitiated and cannot be accepted as final.

## ROME

1. From the first the Christian Church had taken possession of Rome, and disregarding the municipal regions (Rioni), had divided it into seven ecclesiastical districts, each district having a deacon who was guardian of the Church's property, and to some extent overseer of doctrine and discipline: Bishop Fabrianus added seven sub-deacons, and seven cardinal or chief deacons were subsequently appointed over them all—these being persons of position with considerable means who drove fine horses, dressed fashionably, and took part in the social life of Rome. They were a link between the Church and the world, and moreover an avenue of its enrichment. But in the fourth century the worldliness of the Church was a matter of protest, and men and women began to form themselves into communities with the rule of a holy life apart from the priesthood. The need of stricter ordinance for the clergy themselves began to be realised, and it was Pope Julius I who provided for the regularity of Masses in S. John Lateran and in the four patriarchal churches. To the episcopal church he attached the seven bishops who had their Sees in the neighbourhood of Rome; and to S. Pietro, S. Paulo, S. Maggiore and S. Lorenzo-Without-the-Walls he attached severally seven priests. These were called Cardinal-Bishops and Cardinal-Priests: and thus the three ranks of the Cardinals. Their numbers were added to at the Pope's will as time went on, and in the eleventh century they were an instrument ready to hand when the monk Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII, for forty years the controlling spirit of successive Popes, set himself to free the Church from the stranglehold fastened on it by the emperors through Charlemagne. The Cardinals were transformed by him into an Ecclesiastical Senate, and, by decree of Nicholas II, the selection of the Pope was placed in their hands. Through all the inevitable struggles it has remained there ever since, with the natural outcome that only from among themselves is a Pope ever selected. "We are the hinges (*cardines*) upon which the Universal Church rests and moves" they claimed, and they gradually assumed all the trappings of an aristocracy. In the thirteenth century, at the council of Lyons, they were given the precedence of princes, and the red

hat was invented for them there; and about 1460 they obtained their silk cloaks and the scarlet trappings for their horses. Riches too became theirs by means of their endowment with bishoprics and benefices, and outside the ranks of ruling princes there was no position which was so coveted. The whole subject is dealt with *in extenso* in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

2. Mr W. C. Cartwright deals with the subject of the marriage of Cardinals in *On the Constitution of Papal Conclaves* (Edinburgh, 1868). The book has notes and appendices, and the author says he was led to an investigation of the whole intricate subject of the Cardinalate by the case of Cardinal Andrea, and that his object is to prove that the Papacy has never been bound by formalism: "it is certain that there is nothing in the nature of its tenure which must on principle put it out of the power of him who holds that dignity to make freely any such concession as may be demanded by reasons of sound policy". On the actual matter of marriage he writes: "Let a man have no wife living and there appears to be no tangible obstacle to arrest a Pope from naming him a Cardinal. It would seem, however, that a lay Cardinal becomes *de facto* so far subject to ecclesiastical discipline as to require the Pope's consent to return legitimately to secular life and to lay aside the insignia of his rank. There is a long list of Cardinals who have done so.... On the other hand the instances on record of Cardinals who were relieved from their ecclesiastical obligations are extremely curious and testify strikingly to the wonderful elasticity in the regulations of the Church. These dispensations constitute a little-read chapter in the history of the Roman organisation. Cardinals even in Orders have repeatedly been permitted to divest themselves of their dignity and to marry; but in every such case well-defined political influences appear to have been the predominating cause that induced the Pope to concede the favour. Thus in 1588 we find Ferdinand Medicis authorised to throw off the purple and become Grand Duke of Tuscany; in 1642 Cardinal Maurice of Savoy to take a wife and a duchy; in 1695 Cardinal Rainaldo of Este to make the same change in his condition. On the death of King Ladislas of Poland, his brother Casimir, a member of the Society of Jesus, and named Cardinal in 1646, received a dispensation, not merely to abandon the purple, but also to marry the king's widow, his sister-in-law, Mary Gonzaga. Still more astonishing were the favours conceded to two brothers of this lady's house. To prevent extinction of the family, Paul V in 1615 permitted Cardinal Ferdinand Gonzaga to go back into the world. He became enamoured of a woman of inferior rank, Camilla Erdizzani, and married her; but becoming tired of his wife, he procured the Pope's authority for repudiating her, when he espoused Catherine Medicis, daughter of Duke Cosmo II. But there was also a second Cardinal Gonzaga—Vincenzo, the brother of Ferdinand—and he also obtained permission to give up the Church for the sake of indulging his passion for a kinswoman, Isabella Gonzaga. In all these cases it is clear that some Orders had been taken; and therefore in the strict sense of the term, these Cardinals were no longer laymen."

3. Up to the end of the sixteenth century Urbino was surrounded by a moat.

4. Mr James Dennistoun gives as reference for this letter *Dialogo Giraldi*, Vat. Ottob MSS, No. 3153.

5. The Vatican of 1500 had a doorway in a line with the façade of the original church, and which was raised on a step or steps and had a large sundial over it. In the wall at right angles to this, and giving directly on to the piazza, were two arched gateways with entrance into open courts. The present entrance under the colonnade (and the colonnade itself) is the arrangement of Bernini during the papacy of Alexander VII (1655-67). The Vatican has been perpetually building from A.D. 498 to the present day, when it is said to contain twenty great staircases, and over 2000 rooms. Its geography must have been bewildering as far back as the thirteenth century.

6. An abortive attempt to raise Caligula's barge was made again in 1835. In 1895 a second barge was discovered to be lying on the bottom. As all the world knows, the lake has been drained of late years and engineering skill has raised both the great barges intact to a site on the shore where they lie covered by shedding.

7. The Accolti family were of Arezzo. Bernardo's father was a historian, and his brother and a nephew both became Cardinals. He himself had a contemporary reputation as a great poet which posterity has not endorsed.

8. In a letter to the Cardinal da Bibbiena, April 19th, 1516, Bembo says "The lady duchess of Urbino whom I visited yesterday (a duty which I however very rarely perform) commends herself to you."

9. But the statutory yellow veil was not obligatory for (or at all events was not worn by) the 'great' courtesans of Rome.

10. The Corso was once spanned by four triumphal arches—of Marcus Aurelius, Domitian, Claudius and Gordian. Only two remained in 1500, and that of Marcus Aurelius was destroyed in 1662.

11. Santa Maria in Via Lata is built over the remains of a Roman house which is shown to the tourist as the house in which S. Paul lodged with the Centurion. A church was erected on the site in the eighth century by Sergius I, and rebuilt by Innocent VIII in 1483, when he absorbed in it the adjoining church of S. Cyriacus belonging to a monastery, the site of which is now covered by the great Doria palace. In the Middle Ages all this end of the Corso was known as the Via Lata. Now the name only applies to the small street on the north of the church. The church was finally rebuilt by Alexander VII in 1662.

12. This was not the well-known Palazzo Massimo Alle Colonne, but the Palazzo Massimo Pirro which is near it in the Corso Vittoria Emmanuele. They are respectively Nos. 151 and 141.

13. The Bull addressed by Leo X to the Cardinals is modelled on a letter of advice which the Pope had received in boyhood from his father Lorenzo Il Magnifico.

14. Imperia, the most famous of the Roman courtesans, whose tomb with its adulatory Latin inscription is in the atrium of S. Gregorio on the Coelian, died in the year before Leo X became Pope, at the age of 26. She was Caterina di San Celso, and Signor Angelo dal Bufalo gave her a splendid house in the Via Ponte Sisto in Trastevere where her sala was hung with cloth of gold. The chief courtesans of the Golden Age of Pope Leo were Giulia Campana, mother of the more famous Tullia, and who had a house in the Campo Marzio, Angela of Piacenza who was next door, and Dionora Vacchè of Castile who was close by. Other courtesans were Mascia de Agnelli, Julia of Venice, Prudensia, Lucretia Scarratona, Lorenzina, Matrema, La Greca, and Beatrice of Ferrara to whom Vittoria Colonna addressed a sonnet. Some of them had houses near the Campo di Fiore, and more than one in the Via Giulia. It is not possible to trace the history of the rise of the courtesans to a very secure social position, nor to discover when they shook off all connection with the statutory yellow veil of the less successful harlot.

15. The Pantheon was known as the Rotunda in A.D. 1500.

16. The Fourth Stanza of Raphael was not painted until after his death and during the papacy of Clement VII, when it was decorated by his pupils from the cartoons he had prepared for it, with additions of Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano. The ceiling is the later work of Taddeo Zuccheri. All these rooms had been previously painted in fresco by Francesca, Signorelli, Sodama, Perugino and Peruzzi. The desire of Julius II was that Raphael should decorate the whole apartment afresh, but in the Second Stanza the arabesques of Sodama have been left.

17. It has never been known exactly when the small chapel out of the stanze of Raphael was walled up. It had long been forgotten when, in the eighteenth century, Signor Bottari found it mentioned by Vasari, made a long search for it, and finally discovered the framework of the window which overlooks the Sistine Chapel. The doorway, the window, and the grill looking into it from the papal bedroom have been re-opened, but the furnishing of a chapel has not been restored to it (1934).

18. The Medici palace in Rome is now the Italian Senate House. The baths of Nero originally occupied the site, and the fortress-castle of the Crescenti succeeded them. After the return of the Papacy from Avignon the main part of the existing palace was built by the Cardinal Melchior Copia, from whom it passed to the Montoria, and finally to the Medici. After the murder of Alessandro de' Medici there was a long litigation in the Italian courts for its possession between his widow, Margaret of Austria, and Catherine de' Medici, then Dauphiness of France. The decision, which was not reached until 1559, was in Catherine's favour, but she decided to settle the palace on Margaret for life, and during the latter's occupancy it was known as Palazzo Madama and has retained that

name ever since. After Margaret's death it was claimed by Cosimo de' Medici, 1st Grand Duke of Tuscany, but Catherine had already assigned it as a residence for the French Ambassador in Rome and she refused to alter that decision. *Lettres de Cathérine de Medicis*, Vol. IX, 199; Ludwig Reiss, *Die Politik Pauls IV und seiner Nepoten* (Berlin, 1909).

19. This Strozzi Palace, a gem of architecture, is now known as the Palazzo Niccolini Amici, and the ground floor is occupied by an antique dealer. For three centuries, up to A.D. 1600, the Canale di Ponte was the centre of financial Rome, and the Consulates of the various nations were there.

20. Pope Leo wrote to Ferdinand of Aragon "as to Innocenzio I hope he will not disappoint the expectations formed of him. His capacity is excellent, his morals irreproachable and his natural endowments are ornamented by his proficiency in literary studies: insomuch that no one can be more accomplished, virtuous, or engaging." Cardinal Cibo had a palace near the Church of S. Apollino, and became known as the Catalus of Rome. He spent royally, and had to leave Rome at one time because of his debts. He died in 1550 leaving his property to his children—Clement, Alessandro, Ricciarda and Irena.

21. The white habit of the Popes only dates from 1566 when Pius V who was a Dominican observed as Pope the rules of his Order.

22. The game of primiera was a species of 'beggar-my-neighbour'.

23. The *Holy Roman Empire* of Lord Bryce gives the history of what "was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire", from the days of Charles Martel to the end of it all in 1806. He enters into the metaphysical aspect of the duality of Church and Empire and their interdependence, and shows how the Emperor's place and functions changed from the fifth to the fifteenth century—the Emperor becoming, not feudal lord of part of the earth's surface, but invested with an Office different from that of the kings of the earth whom he excelled in dignity. Lord Bryce also shows how the German crown came to be elective while in other countries hereditary succession established itself, and discusses how the election came to rest in the hands of seven princes. Coming to the Emperor Maximilian and his grandson Charles V, he says Maximilian was a prince greater than any that had sat on the Teutonic throne since the death of Frederick of Hohenstaufen, but he was great, not as Roman Emperor, but as Archduke of Austria, Count of Tyrol, Duke of Illyria and Carinthia, and feudal superior of lands in Suabia, Alsace and Switzerland; while by his marriage with Mary, daughter of Charles the Bold, he controlled the Netherlands and most of Burgundy. To Germany the shadowy rights of the Roman Empire had become an ancient device for holding together the discordant members of her body, to its possessors an engine for extending the power of the house of Hapsburg.

24. A papal prelate is an incumbent of a prelature or high office in the Vatican and all prelates have the title of Monsignor whether in full Bishop's Orders, as Sadoletto, or a mere clericus as Bembo.

25. Agostino Chigi the Siennese banker married his Venetian mistress Francesca Andreozza, and the Pope gave the bride away and was present at the banquet afterwards, when each guest was served on gold plate engraved with his own armorial bearings.

26. The old basilica of St Peter's had five naves divided by rows of columns, and there were five doors. The middle door was only opened for papal processions; to the right was the porta Romana reserved for women, and the porta Guidonea for pilgrims; to the left the porta Ravennati reserved for men, and the porta Guidizia for the dead.

27. Dr Ludwig von Pastor says "Julius II bequeathed to his successor... the reconstruction of S. Peter's and the Vatican. To carry out and finish these vast constructions on which the bold spirit of the Rovere Pope had set to work, demanded someone other than Leo X whose reckless extravagance and disordered finances soon deprived him of the means indispensable to the fulfilment of such projects." Raphael was now architect-in-chief.

28. The affair of the Flemish scholar Christophe Longueil was an extraordinary controversy between Italian and northern classicism which split Roman society from top to bottom and in the virulence of the passions it aroused can only be compared with the Dreyfus case of a later century. The episode has been fully expounded in all its relevancy in *Il Cinquecento* of Professor Guiseppe Toffanin.

29. Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Ferrara, died in 1519. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan is a manuscript volume which contains nine letters and a copy of verses in the handwriting of Lucrezia, and superscribed 'al mio carissimo M. Pietro Bembo'. The seals of Este and Borgia are appended, and the writer describes herself 'Lucrezia Estense da Borgia'. The dates of the letters are minuted in the handwriting of Bembo, and at the end of the volume is a canzone in Spanish of his own composition. In a folding of vellum, tied with ribands, is a tress of fair hair.

30. All that is inscribed over the tomb of Morosina in the Church of San Bartolomeo at Padua is *Morosinoe, Torquati Bembi Matri*. Bembo ever had his eye on the Cardinalate and if he married her he was careful not to acknowledge it.

31. "Please God that I may depart from Rome and from Pope Leo, ostensibly requesting leave from him for a brief period in order to recover my health in my native state, but not really intending to return any more, and to live for the little or much of life that remains to me for myself, and not for others more than myself." Letter from Bembo to Federigo Fregosa, Archbishop of Salerno, from Padua, July 20th, 1522.

32. Pierio Valeriano who had accompanied Giuliano de' Medici on his matrimonial excursion to Turin was a Latin poet and imitator of Horace, and a writer on Antiquities, Science and Art. But he is best known by his *De Literatorum Infelicitate* which contains curious anecdotes of the scholars of the age.

33. In 1516 a marriage was arranged for Castiglione by his mother and the Gonzaga family with Ippolita Torelli whose mother was a Bentivoglio. The bride was only fifteen years of age, but notwithstanding disparity in years the marriage was a very happy one. They lived partly in their town house on the piazza Sordello in Mantua, and partly on the family estate at Casatico. Several of their charming letters to one another are in existence.

## FLORENCE

1. A letter from Count Baldassare to the Duchess Elisabetta dated Rome, June 12th, 1522, relates at length how much his actions have been misrepresented by malicious and slanderous tongues (*Mantuan Archives*).

2. The Spedale founded in the thirteenth century still occupies the whole of the side of the square facing the cathedral in Siena and still has a European reputation.

3. Cardinal Alfonso Petrucci who had been strangled in S. Angelo, and Cardinal Raeffello Petrucci, were cousins.

4. Luca Pitti began the enormous palace which still bears his name in 1440, hoping to eclipse the Medici, but his party was finally crushed in 1466. He himself was pardoned and allowed to die in the unfinished pile which had been designed for him by Brunelleschi.

5. The shops on the Ponte Vecchio of Florence were not built until the reign of the 1st Grand Duke Cosimo, but an engraving of 1490 in the Berlin Museum shows the bridge of Taddeo Gaddi with buildings on it and the gap in the middle of them which still exists. The original bridge was of Roman construction.

6. "Allowing for the difference in the value of money, Lorenzo's annual expenditure for books alone amounted to from £55,006 to £95,000 sterling. He sent the celebrated Giovanni Lascario twice to the Orient for the express purpose of discovering and purchasing ancient manuscripts. On his second voyage Lascario brought back two hundred Greek works, as many as eighty of which were not up to that time even known" (*Florentine Life During the Renaissance*, by Walter Scarfe).

7. The Coronation of Adrian VI was on August 31st, 1522.

8. The legend of the herbalist's shop as the foundation of the Medici fortunes has no credence among the weightier historians.

9. Tacitus, *Ann.* iv, 55.

10. The picture in the Berlin Gallery, long supposed to be a portrait of Lucrezia Tornabuoni by Botticelli, has now been discredited and is said to be neither by Botticelli nor to portray the mother of Lorenzo Il Magnifico. It does not appear in the 1931 Catalogue.



11. Raphael's portrait of Leo X, one of the great portraits of the world, hangs today in the Pitti Palace in Florence. In 1841 there was a controversy as to which was the original picture, and it was decided by the experts that the painting in the Pitti Palace belonging to the Medici collection is without serious doubt Raphael's work. The Andrea del Sarto copy passed through various hands after the sale of the Mantuan collection and is now in the Museo Nazionale at Naples.

12. Florence was the most expensive city in Europe, and the University there had never really flourished because students from abroad were discouraged by the cost of living. Lorenzo Il Magnifico thought that the city had too many pleasures, and he determined to revive the ancient Academy of the town of Pisa which had passed under Florentine rule about A.D. 1400. Pisa was dull and cheap and had enough empty houses for students. He moved the Schools of law, theology, and medicine there, giving them a state subsidy, and leaving only the Schools of philosophy and philology in Florence.

13. *The Parlamento* was the democratic expedient of mediaeval Florence, and was the coming together of the populace at the summons of the great bell of the Palazzo Pubblico to register proposals by acclamation without debate.

*The Balìa* was a commission with plenipotentiary powers appointed by the Parlamento. This was the old republican constitution. It had been modified and enlarged by councils and committees, but at its head had remained—

*The Signoria* of eight priors of liberty, which, in default of a Medici, was presided over by a Gonfalonier (i.e. standard bearer) of justice.

14. The pillared courtyard, from which the principal staircase of the Medici palace rises, has an entrance into the Via Larga (now Cavour). Beyond it is the duplicate space of this small garden, which on its fourth side has a wall and gates opening into the Via Ginori. On the south, the palace wall rises from the narrow Via Gori and on the north there used to be a garden running between the Via Ginori and the Via Larga towards the city wall. This garden was partly demolished when the Riccardi family bought and enlarged the palace, and the whole space is now built over. The palace is now used as public offices, and the interior has been so altered and defaced that no Medici returning to it would recognise it. In particular the loggia giving straight on to the Via Larga, where Cosimo *Pater Patriæ* used to interview any citizen who desired word with him, has been built in.

15. The parties in Florence were the *Ottimati* who were aristocratic and had no democratic leanings; the *Piagnoni* or burgher faction; the *Arrabbiati*, about 800 fiery youths mostly of the lower class; and the *Palleschi* or party of the Medici.

16. The Church of the Santissima Annunziata not far from S. Marco, founded in the thirteenth century, is to this day the most revered shrine in Tuscany. The flowers piled in the frescoed portico for offering at the shrine are one of the 'sights' of Florence on a sunny morning.

17. It is related that, when Queen-dowager in France, Catherine de' Medici would invariably bring out a great sheaf of coloured silks after supper and apply herself diligently to her embroidery.

18. *Storia di Paolo Giovio*, II, 22.

19. The glowing frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli in the Chapel of the Medici palace depict the procession of the Magi, and the figures are all portraits of the men of the Medici family and the Medicean Court. The minute size of the domestic chapel in Italian palaces is owing to the fact they were, and are, reserved for the use of the members of the family only: the household has never been admitted to them.

20. The portrait by Raphael of Giuliano de' Medici was for a long time in the collection Baldovinetti, and then in the collection Brini—whence the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia acquired it in 1867. Subsequently it became the property of Prince Sciarra Colonna who sold it in Paris in 1901, and Herr Otto Huldshinsky of Berlin bought it for his collection from Charles Sedelmeyer. It is now in the possession of Mr Jules Bache of New York.

21. For Pier Francesco de' Medici see pedigree.

22. As all the world knows, the decoration of the Medicean chapel of Michel Angelo at S. Lorenzo was never completed.

23. Charles Duke of Bourbon was son of Gilbert Count de Montpensier. He was next heir to the throne of France after Charles Duke d'Alençon. He was made Grand Constable of France at the age of 25. He had the dukedom of Bourbon and an immense fortune with his wife, but was ejected from her estates in a suit brought against him by the mother of Francis I and he became a rebel against France.

24. Luigi Guicciardini, the Gonfalonier of the Republic, was the brother of Francesco Guicciardini, the historian and General of the papal troops in Romagna.

25. The 'ringhiera'—the platform in front of the Palazzo Publico—was removed in 1812 and replaced by the present flight of steps.

26. When Maria Salviati's son Cosimo became 1st Grand Duke of Tuscany he, too, decided that the palace in the Via Larga was but a citizen's abode, and he lived with his wife Eleanor of Toledo in the Palazzo Publico, until the Pitti Palace on the other side of the river was completed for them: this is now the royal residence in Florence of the House of Savoy.

27. Clement VII grew his beard during the three months he was besieged in S. Angelo.

28. The Dominican convent of Santa Lucia, founded about A.D. 1300, became in the words of the Bull of Pope Eugenius IV "a disgrace to religion and a scandal to the city". Contessina de' Medici wife of Cosimo *Pater Patriæ*, with the aid of Archbishop Antonino, concerned herself with its complete reform, and she gave her dowry for the reconstruction of the buildings. It fell later under the influence of Savonarola, and therefore became definitely anti-Medicean like its near neighbour San Marco, which had been rebuilt by Michelozzi mainly at the cost of Cosimo himself.

29. Among his feeble measures for preparing for the siege Clement had ordered that no one should leave Rome, but on the plea of her health Clarice Strozzi and her husband were allowed to go on May 4th. They had news of the fall of Rome at Cività Vecchia on May 6th and arrived at Pisa on May 10th. Here Filippo Strozzi received messages, both from Cardinal Passerini and his brother-in-law Capponi, begging for his support for the Medici and for the republican cause respectively. It was decided that Clarice should go ahead to Florence. In the *Life of Filippo Strozzi* by his brother Lorenzo, it is explained that Filippo thus avoided the danger that "the Medici finding him in Florence without being on their side might suddenly assassinate him. And in the second place he gained the advantage, if need were hereafter, to excuse himself to the Pope by throwing all the blame upon his wife."

30. The prevailing position of Filippo Strozzi in his family has never been explained. He and his brother Lorenzo were the sons of a second marriage, and Lorenzo was the elder of the two: while Alfonso, the surviving son of the first marriage, did not die until 1534. Filippo Strozzi the elder, who built the palace, designed it for separate households for his two families, and that accounts for the unsatisfactory disposition of the rooms to-day. Caterina, younger sister of Lorenzo and Filippo, was the wife of Niccolò Capponi. Lorenzo's wife was a Rucellai.

31. It would seem that Cortona had decided to make a payment to the troops, but Filippo Strozzi had some hold over the Medici treasurer Francesco del Nero, who was induced to send all the funds to the office of Lorenzo Strozzi and to leave the city for Lucca. Cortona was told the treasury was empty.

32. This long chamber or gallery was originally an open loggia, but, during his Cardinalate, Clement VII built in the arches and put in windows. The frescoes seen there today were painted by Luca Giordano in the seventeenth century.

33. This vulgar invective is repeated by every historian of the period but generally with the comment that it is very likely not true.

## LE SELVE

1. In the fourteenth century the Guinigi had established a supremacy in Lucca after a fierce faction fight with the Porteguerra. There were two branches of the family; hence the two palaces in the Via Guinigi.

2. The House of Savoy is the oldest reigning dynasty in Europe and has had counts,

dukes, and kings throughout twenty-eight generations. In 443 the Burgundians, with consent of the Romans, established themselves in Sapandia (Savoy) and it, together with Burgundy, fell under the dominion of the Frankish kings in 534. But after the death of Charlemagne, Savoy and Burgundy asserted their independence under Rudolph who was crowned King of Burgundy in 888. Rudolph III died without heirs a century later, and Umberto delle Bianchemani, who had become prominent in Savoy about 1003, gained the imperial favour and in 1036 was made Count of Savoy and had Nyon, Aosta, Moriana, Savoy, Iselley, Chablais and Tarentasia. He married his son Oddone to the daughter and sole heiress of the Marquis of Susa who brought with her a great neighbouring territory in what is now Piedmont. In 1416 the Emperor Sigismund raised the Count of Savoy to the rank of a Duke.

In 1504 Duke Philibert II was succeeded by his half-brother Charles III. Their sister Louise of Savoy married the Duke of Orleans and was the mother of Francis I, and in 1527 French influence was paramount in Savoy. Savoy had command of the passes of the Alps but was always somewhat at the mercy of the kingdoms around her, and Charles III, surnamed the Good, was for peace at any price and surrendered himself into the hands of his nephew. He reigned for fifty-nine years and his son, Emmanuel Philibert, established the monarchy of Savoy. He rebuilt all the strongholds, restored material prosperity, and made Turin the seat of the government. The capital of the original territory of Savoy had been Chambéry.

3. Massa lies between the Apuan Alps and the sea. In 1441 the people of Massa elected Antonio Alberico Malespina, Marquis of Fosdinova, as their lord. His son Giacomo bought Carrara from the Fregosi, and was succeeded by a cousin, who died in 1519 leaving an only daughter Riccarda, who married, in 1520, Lorenzo Cibo the nephew of Leo X.

4. There is a very complete account of the Farnese family, and of the career of Alessandro Farnese, in the Introduction to Vol. XI of Dr Ludwig von Pastor's *History of the Popes*.

5. Mr J. A. Symonds in his *Age of the Despots* tells a different story.

6. After the death of Filippo Strozzi in 1538, the villa of Le Selve was bought by the Vitelli, and the Marchese Vitelli sold it in 1577 to the Salviati, who reconstructed and greatly enlarged it, and laid out gardens and a park. It passed by inheritance to the Borghese, who sold it on the downfall of their fortunes, and its present owner is the Duchessa Bonelli Crescenzi. The Carmelite Monastery close by did not survive Napoleon III in Italy, and the buildings are now occupied by the peasants who work on the estate.

7. The Order of the Chietines (or Theatines) was an outcome, for active ministry, of the Oratory of Divine Love which was for devotion only. They had the same founder in Gaetano Cajetan (canonized 1671). The new Order got its name from its first Superior, Giovanni Caraffa, Bishop of Chieti (Lat. Theate) and who was afterwards Paul IV. They had first of all a small house in the Strada Leonina, and in 1525 Giberti, then Datary, provided them with a new dwelling on the Pincian at that time unbuilt on, and where the Villa Medici now stands.

8. The minutes of this meeting, on June 10th, 1527, are printed in full in *Niccolò Machiavelli* by Giuseppe Prezzolini. There were 555 black balls and 12 white.

9. Lord Acton says that *Il Principe* was probably written between August and September 1513. The original manuscript is in the Laurentian Library. It was first printed in Rome in 1532 at the press of Antonio Blado. There is no first edition of it in England.

10. Galeotto de' Medici was Florentine Envoy to the Holy See, and Malatesta de' Medici was the papal Governor of S. Angelo. Both belonged to the co-lateral branches of the family. And so did Bernardo de' Medici, Bishop of Forlì.

11. The grass still grows between the stones around Orvieto Cathedral and the wind still blows. The audience chamber is no longer a ruin, but, somewhat over-restored, serves as a museum, and the Archbishop of Orvieto resides in the building which connects the museum and the Cathedral. This old papal palace must once have been a gem of Gothic architecture: the outlines of Gothic windows are to be seen everywhere, and anyone who can make friends with the episcopal butler, and is not afraid of a little climbing and some

dust, may behold the spans of Gothic ceilings and much that is of architectural interest. The whole is however heavily overlaid with the alterations of later periods, and in the present day the hand of 1850 or thereabouts lies very heavily on it.

12. Dr Ludwig von Pastor says: "The League made the most tempting promises to the Pope. Not only should he receive back the Papal States, but also designate to the kingdom of Naples and be compensated for all damages and costs of the war. But the events of the past year had made Clement very cautious. Despite all the pressure brought upon him he would give no decided answer. His inmost sympathies at this time were certainly with the League, for he feared the power of the Emperor who in possession of Naples and Milan was Lord of all things, (*Omnium rerum dominus*), and he wished for the expulsion from Italy of those who had done him such unheard-of wrong. But from any attempt of this kind he was deterred by weighing closely the actual state of things; a waiting attitude, giving to both parties a certain amount of hope, appeared to the Pope to be the best.

"Perhaps the conduct of the League itself had even more influence on Clement than his feelings of helplessness when pitted against the victorious Spaniard. He could not trust a confederacy, the members of which, each engrossed in his own interests, had left him to his downfall in the year of misfortune 1527. Might not this trick be played again at any moment? Above all—and this was decisive—the League had assumed a character which made it quite impossible for the Pope to enter it. Florence, from which his family had been expelled, was supported by France, Venice had seized Ravenna and Cervia, the Duke of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio. Both were unwilling to give back their plunder, and yet such were the allies whom Clement was to join against the emperor!

"In view of this situation the Pope and his diplomatists directed their efforts towards securing the restoration of the States of the Church under a guarantee of neutrality" (*History of the Popes*, Vol. x, Chapter 1).

13. Benvenuto Cellini, who claimed for himself an imaginary ancestor, one Fiorino da Cellino a captain in the army of Julius Caesar, also claimed that it was he who had killed the Constable of Bourbon with a musket shot from San Angelo, and of this he did not cease to boast.

14. There is a Strozzi vault in the Church at Le Selve marked by a circle of marble in the floor of the nave, but it has not been possible to discover what coffins it contains. There is no memorial to Clarice in the Strozzi chapel in Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

15. Vespasiano Colonna's will in the Colonna Archives is dated March 12th, 1528, and provides that any sons born to Ippolito de' Medici shall take the name of Colonna.

16. Bembo's collection of manuscripts is now in the Vatican.

## PAGLIANO

1. The fief of Fondi came to Vespasiano Colonna through the marriage of his great-grandfather Lorenzo with Sveva daughter of Jacobella Gaetini, Count of Fondi. The dukedom of Trajetto was bestowed on his father, Prospero, by Charles VIII of France for his military services in supporting him against Aragon in the struggle for the possession of Naples.

2. The words of the will are "mia mogliera donna et patrona in tutto lo stato predetto en ancor del Regno, sua vita durante servando lo habito de vidua...."

3. The brando was a species of kiss-in-the-ring, each man kissing his partner and then dancing with and kissing each lady in turn; returning to his partner whom he kissed again.

4. This document is in the unpublished archives at Mantua. "I, Isabella Colonna, declare, confess, and swear by the Omnipotent God that I have taken for my legitimate spouse the Illus. Sig. Luigi de Gonzaga; and thus I have pledged him faith to take no other husband while his Lordship lives as Holy Mother Church commands. And this I have

done and promised in my Palace of Pagliano, in the Salvarobba, his Lordship espousing me with the ring. In the presence of witnesses... on this sixteenth day of April 1528

I, Isabella Colonna with my own hand

I, Francesco Bocalini of Mantua

I, Paris Biondi of Mantua

I, Giachetto Favisino, of Alessandri."

5. In the Archives Modena, Canc. Duc. Dispacci Or. Este in Florence is a letter from Alessandro Guarino to the Duke of Ferrara dated August 12th, 1528. It says of Luigi Gonzaga that he is "ill-satisfied with the Pope who in the end has refused him his wife, she being pregnant, and being desperate she tried to throw herself out of a window".

6. The widowed Maria Varano whose lover was murdered by her brother Francesco Maria della Rovere, afterwards Duke of Urbino (see Part I), had one son, Sigismondo, who inherited from his father the two fiefs of Sinigaglia and Camerino. His uncle, Giovanni Maria, usurped Camerino, and after the assassination of Sigismondo in 1522, Pope Leo, out of hatred for the Rovere, gave him Sinigaglia too, and the title of Duke of Camerino: he married moreover the Pope's niece Caterina Cibo, daughter of Maddelena de' Medici. He died in 1527 leaving one daughter, Giulia, who married Guidobaldo II, Duke of Urbino, in 1534.

7. The Bull of Ippolito de' Medici's appointment as Cardinal is dated January 22nd, 1529. He was at this time 18 years and 8 months old.

8. Dr Ludwig von Pastor says: "By the 23rd of June a compact relating to the marriage of Alessandro de' Medici with Margaret, the Emperor's natural daughter, had been concluded... On the 29th the signatures were attached to the treaty... The Emperor promised his help towards restoring the Medicean rule in Florence and reinstating the Church in her temporal possessions, by insisting on the restitution of Ravenna and Cervia on the part of Venice, and of Modena, Reggio and Rubbiera on the part of Alfonso of Ferrara, the rights of the Empire being left unimpaired. The Duke of Ferrara was to be declared forfeited of his Duchy... In taking possession of the Duchy of Milan, 'the fountain head of the troubles of Italy', Charles in the event of Sforza being found guilty of felony would act in conjunction with the Pope... All amicable means of dealing with the reform in Germany having been exhausted, Charles and Ferdinand, his brother, who was included in the terms of the treaty, were to take forcible measures for the suppression of that movement... It seems astonishing that Charles should have conceded such terms to the despoiled and vanquished Pope... but... the status of the Papacy was still one of high importance. The friendship of Clement was an imperative necessity to Charles unless his interests (in Europe) were to suffer the most grievous injury. Moreover the exhaustion of the Imperial finances... came into consideration. Lastly Charles hoped that his alliance with the Pope would deal a mortal blow at the League."

9. Charles had given to his brother Ferdinand the five Austrian provinces farthest from Spain and the Netherlands, also the Tyrol, the Vorarlberg and Suabian territories: later he gave him lands in Alsace, Würtemberg and the upper Rhine. Here began the permanent division between the Spanish and the Austrian Hapsburgs. The Emperor Suleyman left Constantinople for the campaign which ended in the abortive siege of Vienna on April 10th, 1529.

10. The letters of Charles V to the Prince of Orange show that the former expressly wished for a protracted advance against Florence in order that if possible an agreement might be reached between the Pope and the citizens of his own town.

11. This sonnet of Luigi to his Isabella is among the *Rime di Luigi Gonzaga detto Rodomonte* printed with a separate title-page at the end of *Vita di Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga* (Parma, 1753). The author of the book, Father Ireneo Affò, was a Friar Minor of the Observance and Vice-Librarian to the Duke of Parma.

12. These sonnets addressed to Camilla Gonzaga are in the published poems of Bembo and Molza severally. She was married three years later to Count Alessandro Porto of Vicenza.

13. Charles first of all received the iron crown of Lombardy in the chapel of the Palazzo Publico in Bologna on February 22nd, his coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1520 having been previously confirmed by a Bull. It was the custom for the emperor to

assume three crowns successively, one of silver at Aix-la-Chapelle on succeeding to the empire; one of iron at Monza near Milan which confirmed their rule in Lombardy as kings of Italy, and one of gold in Rome at the hands of the Pontiff or his surrogate. Ambassadors from Monza had brought the iron crown to Bologna for Charles V. It was in fact principally of gold, being a golden circlet five inches in depth with a thin plate of iron to keep it firm. The legend that the iron was a nail from our Saviour's cross is said by Muratori to have been invented by Ripamonte.

14. The town and district of Cività-Penna are in the kingdom of Naples and in the province of Lower Abruzzi. The town was destroyed by Sylla and rebuilt by Roger, founder of the kingdom of Sicily. It has today about 8000 inhabitants. There is no record that Alessandro de' Medici ever visited his dukedom.

15. Margaret of Parma, who had Alessandro de' Medici as her first husband, Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, for her second, and was afterwards Governor of the Netherlands, was the natural daughter of Charles V and of Juana Van der Ghynst. She was born at Oudenarde on January 18th, 1522. See *L'Origine Maternelle et la Naissance de Marguerite de Parme* (Crutzen, Ghent).

16. Veronica Gamba was born in 1485, was daughter of Count Gianfrancesco Gamba of Brescia and of Alda Pio the sister of Emilia Pio of the court of Urbino. She was a Greek and Latin scholar, a student of theology and of philosophy, a brilliant conversationalist and a writer of witty, wise and worldly letters. She was a poetess who was renowned in her own lifetime, and her sonnets are not inferior to those of Vittoria Colonna and others. She seems to have had every gift but that of beauty. She had corresponded with Bembo since she was seventeen, and in 1505, when he went to Brescia, they cemented a friendship that was lifelong. A great many of their letters have survived but an enormous number must be missing. She was married at the age of twenty-four to Giberto Lord of Corregio, a widower with growing-up daughters, and her reputation drew many famous men to her small court. She was diligent in befriending Antonio Allegri, the painter, from boyhood and she brought him to the notice both of Isabella d'Este and the Emperor Charles. (He is now known to fame as *Corregio*.) Her husband died in 1518 and she was left guardian of her two sons and administratrix of the estate. In 1528 her brother Uberto was made governor of Bologna, and she went to reside there, obtaining from him a military command for her eldest son Ippolito. The Palazzo Massilia where she lived became the brilliant and learned centre of society, and the Emperor Charles seems to have had a real admiration for her: he not only visited her at Corregio after the Coronation, but he paid her another visit there in 1532. She died at Corregio in 1550 immensely regretted by her people. Her tomb in the church of San Domenico and her favourite dwelling, the Casino, were both destroyed by the Spaniards in 1556.

17. The Dispositions of the Commission concerned with the marriage of Isabella Colonna and Luigi Gonzaga are dated March 28th, 1530, and are among the unpublished archives at Mantua.

18. John, Duke of Albany, was the son of Duke Alexander, who had tried unsuccessfully to supplant his brother James III in Scotland and had been obliged to take refuge in France. His son John was next heir to the throne of Scotland after the two children of James IV, but he was entirely French in upbringing, and he married Anne de la Tour d'Auvergne, a younger sister of Madeleine, the mother of Catherine de' Medici. (Another sister, Jeanne, married Jean de Poitiers, and the famous Diane was their daughter.)

19. This midnight walk of the nine-year-old Caterina de' Medici across Florence was on December 7th, 1527.

20. The Duke of Gramont had been asked by the Pope not to leave Rome until Catherine arrived in order that he might make a report of her to King Francis. The report of Niccolò Raince speaking of her wisdom and prudence is in Bibl. Nat. Fonds français, No. 3099, p. 76.

21. *Didlogo Mercurio y Caron* by Juan de Valdès was published in 1521, and deals with the corruption of the age in the form of a dialogue.

22. For Caterina Cibo see Feliciangeli, *Notizie e docum. sulla vita di Cat.-Cibo-Varano, duchessa di Camerino* (Camerino, 1891).

23. Dr Ludwig von Pastor gives a detailed account of Giberti's administration of his

diocese, and the wisdom, calmness, courage and imagination of his reforms. It is interesting, as a side issue, that it was he who first introduced the reservation of the Eucharist in a tabernacle on the high altar, and the ringing of the bell at the Elevation. Confessionals of the shape now generally in use are said to have originated with him.

24. Vittoria, Ascanio and Federigo Colonna belonged to a younger branch of the family, their father being Fabrizio of Marino, Grand Constable of Naples. Giovanna d'Arragona was painted by Raphael and Titian and sung by Ariosto, and her court-poet Luca Contite wrote about fifty sonnets in her honour.

25. This sonnet of the Cardinal de' Medici's, together with another very similar to it, is published in *Rime della Signora Tullia di Aragona: et di Diversi a Lei con Privilegio*. In Vinegia appresso Gabriel Ciolito de Ferrari MDXLVII.

Anima bella, che nel bel tuo lume  
divino interno ti rivolgi e giri;  
e indi in voce dolcemente spiri  
il suon ch' avanza ogni mortal costume,  
Onde la mia poi d' amorose piume  
coverta avien ch' al Ciel volando aspiri;  
e nel tuo chiaro raggio aperto miri  
com' amor sani, ancida, arda e consume,  
deh! se l' alta bellezza e 'l dolce canto  
ond' in te stessa sol beata sei;  
e s' Amor punto mai te piacque o piace,  
prego volgendo in me 'l bel viso santo  
al lungo penar mio dia qualche pace,  
e qualche tregua a gli aspri dolor miei.

26. A picture of Tullia of Arragona by Alessandro Bonvincino is in the Tosio Gallery at Brescia. She claimed to be the daughter of the Cardinal of Arragon.

27. In the Archives of Modena is a letter from Antonio Romeo to the Duke of Ferrara January 14th, 1531—"Tomorrow Sg<sup>r</sup> Luigi Gonzaga will marry (in the presence of the Pope so they say) the daughter of Vespasiano Colonna, for which he had permission from the Emperor. The wedding festivities were to be held in the house of Mons<sup>r</sup> di Mantua."

28. The Bargello in Florence was not used for executions after 1494. They took place at the back of the Palazzo Publico where the Executor of Justice lived.

29. This villa on Monte Mario was built by Giulia Romano after the designs of Raphael, and Raphael was inspecting the work when he was summoned by a messenger from the Vatican and caught the chill which caused his death. The villa was left by Clement VII to Alessandro de' Medici, and after the latter's murder in 1536, it passed to his widow Margaret of Austria, and has ever since been known as the Villa Madama (see Rome, note 18). Margaret married Ottavio Farnese, the nephew of Pope Paul III, as her second husband, and through Elisabetta Farnese the villa passed to the Bourbon kings of Naples. For a very long time it stood half-ruined, with cattle stabled in the lower rooms and peasants living above them. But its present owner, Conte Frasso, has lately restored it, has laid down wonderful marble floors, and has given it a circular stone staircase of great beauty and interest.

30. Giorgio Vasari himself relates that he went to Florence in 1532 and painted frescoes in the Medici palace of events in the life of Caesar. Nothing of all this exists there today.

31. On June 9th, 1531, Clement signed a treaty in which he declared that should the marriage of Caterina with the Duke of Orleans take place he was willing to give her Pisa, Leghorn, Modena, Reggio and Rubbiera: also, in return for a compensation to be agreed on, Parma and Piacenza. As regards Milan and Genoa which Francis had demanded, he gave no decisive answer, but he was willing to assist in the reconquest of Urbino. Subsequently he was alarmed at having committed himself to such an extent, and the French court found that their belief that he was securely in their hands was a delusion. For the treaty see letter of G. M. della Porta, June 13th, 1531, State Archives, Florence.

32. The Venetian Ambassador, Soriano, wrote: "I have heard it whispered by some

that the Cardinal de' Medici wants to put off his priestly robes and to take as his wife the little duchess, his third cousin, with whom he lives on the best possible terms and is also much loved by her. Indeed there is no other in whom she confides so much and whose counsel she is apt to seek about her wishes and desires as the said Cardinal" (*Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veniti al Senato*, Edite da Eugenio Alberi. Firenze, 1839. Rel. II, 3, p. 280).

## FONDI

1. Fondi, then called Fundi, was the birthplace of Vitruvius, and of the Empress Galleria, wife of Vitellius, and the Emperor Galba was born in the vicinity. The family of Livia, the wife of Augustus, was native to the town. The site of the villa of Varro is on a mountainside close by.

2. The castle, which still crowns the conical hill on which the greater part of Itri lies, has been in ruins since 1414 when the Gaetani Count of Fondi assaulted and took the town. Its present owner is Signor Avv. Pasquale Emilio Tallonghi.

3. Horace, *Odes* I, 20. Horace on the Praetor, *Sat.* I, v, 34, speaks again of the wine of Fundi.

4. Martial, *Epigrams* cxiii and cxv.

5. In the Mantuan Archives is a letter of F. Peregrino (Rome, December 17th, 1531), saying that on the previous day the Pope had informed a full consistory of Cardinals that according to trustworthy intelligence a Turkish fleet of 300 ships with 40,000 men on board would sail for Italy in the spring, while at the same time the sultan with 150,000 would advance on Hungary.

6. Ferdinand of Hapsburg claimed Hungary as the brother-in-law of King Louis of Hungary who was drowned after the victory of the Turks on the field of Mohacz in 1526. Civil war raged until the Turks again overran Hungary in their advance on Vienna in 1529. Their attempt to take the city failed, and on the approach of winter Suleyman retreated to Constantinople, losing 14,000 men from hardships on the way. But Hungary was still in his power and he bestowed its crown on Johann Zapolya, a prince of Transylvania who had failed to come to the aid of King Louis. Zapolya was excommunicated by Clement VII on December 21st, 1529. The French party at this time (1531-2) were pressing Clement to repeal the excommunication.

7. Costanza d'Avalos, a cousin of Vittoria Colonna, was the wife of Alfonso Piccolomini, Duke of Amalfi, and Captain-General for the Emperor at Siena. They had a palace on the island of Nisida in the Bay of Naples.

8. The Knights of St John were the later version of the original Knights Hospitaller at Jerusalem who looked after the sick and wounded in the hospital there, and their Order was established by a Bull of Paschal II in 1113. After they were driven out of Rhodes by Sultan Suleyman in 1522 the Emperor Charles V in 1530 gave them the island of Malta.

9. This portrait of Catherine de' Medici, still unfinished when she left Rome, was for some time in the private apartments in the Vatican, but its present whereabouts is unknown.

10. Dott. Bruto Amante has written the story of Giulia Gonzaga (*Giulia Gonzaga—Contessa di Fondi—e Il Movimento Religioso Femminile nel Secolo XVI*. Bologna, Ditta Nicola Zanichelli, 1896). He discusses the subject of her portraits, and claims that the attractive picture in the Staedel Gallery in Frankfurt is the only authentic one, because there is a panorama of a village in the background which he himself feels certain is the village of Montecelli about four miles from Fondi and one of the fiefs of the duchy of Trajetto. This reason, naïve in itself, is vitiated by the fact that there is proof farther on in the volume that he can never have been in Fondi. Vasari has his tale that the picture commissioned by Ippolito de' Medici was given by him to Francis I at the time of Caterina de' Medici's marriage and was hung at Fontainebleau; if this was so, its subsequent history is a blank. The National Gallery in London has one reputed but doubtful portrait, and another is in the possession of Lord Radnor at Longford Castle, and was lent



to the exhibition of Italian art at Burlington House in 1929: the woman of this last picture has a grave, intellectual face and might be thirty years of age. A likeness to the Stäedel portrait can be traced, but the features are more rarefied.

11. Letter of G. M. della Porta, July 9th, 1532, in State Archives, Florence.

12. Francesco Molza and Francesco Berni were both poets of some talent and of dissolute lives. Molza had come to Rome before the sack from Bologna, with a letter of introduction from her son Ercole to Isabella d'Este, and he is still to be heard of in the time of Pope Paul III directing the production of Machiavelli's *Clizia* for an entertainment given by the Pope's son Cardinal Ranuccio Farnese. Berni was secretary to Giberti when Datary, but on account of his behaviour the latter had to get rid of him, and he attached himself later to Ippolito de' Medici's court. Tolomei and Flaminio were more seriously disposed. Tolomei, of the Sienese family, served the Cardinal Ippolito in a secretarial capacity, was deeply interested in the religious questions of the day and later on belonged to Cardinal Pole's circle at Viterbo. Flaminio, the son of the learned Gianantonio Flaminio, was born at Imolo in 1498. His Latin poems brought him an early reputation, and he was invited to the court of Urbino. He was attracted to the reformed doctrines, and later on settled at Naples to be near Valdès, and translated all his books into Italian, dedicating them to Giulia Gonzaga. He also revised Benedetto's *Il Beneficio della morte di Cristo* for publication. After the death of Valdès he too joined the circle at Viterbo, and Dr Ludwig von Pastor says "Pole found it easy to wean him from the errors instilled in him by Juan Valdès." Both Tolomei and Flaminio, like everyone else, wrote verse.

13. There is a copy of this Newsletter in the British Museum. It is signed Albino de B. It was probably printed at Venice. Newsletters were very common at this date, and booksellers and printers published accounts of any striking event as a speculation.

14. Towards the end of the twelfth century a small band of Asiatic nomads fashioned the Turkish empire from the ruins of the realms of the Byzantine Caesars and the Seljuk Turks. It included Carthage, Memphis, Tyre and Nineveh, Palmyra, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Smyrna, Damascus, Athens, Philippi and Adrianople. Sultan Selim added to it Syria, Turkestan and Egypt.

15. A letter in the Mantuan Archives from Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga to his brother the Duke of Mantua (Rome, June 23rd, 1532) quotes various opinions about the Pope's decision to send Ippolito to Mantua and says: "Io per me dico che la potissima (causa) sia stata la desperatione del papa di removerlo mai dalla vita che tiene senza mandarlo alla disciplina del imperatore la quale è grave e severa."

16. The story of the Cardinal de' Medici's escapades is told in Vol. lvi, Chaps. 567, 625-750 and Vol. lvii, Chap. 109 of *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto* (died 1535) published by the Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria, 1879-1903.

17. Hamy 153 seq.; Lavissee v, 2-74.

18. Letter of G. M. della Porta dated October 25th, 1532, in State Archives, Florence.

19. For Pietro Aretino's system of blackmail see Dr Ludwig von Pastor's *Lives of the Popes*, Vol. x, p. 342.

20. In his *Ragionamento del Zoppino* Aretino says of Zaffetta of Venice: "You understand how to cover an impudent face with an honest mask, obtaining gifts and praises by wise and discreet means. You are modest in all your affairs accepting what is given you without violently seizing what is withheld. You do not assure jealousy by planting suspicions in the minds of those who never thought of it. Lying, envy, and evil speaking, the fifth element of the courtesan, do not hold your mind and tongue in continual employment. You prize virtue and honour the virtuous, which is not usually the custom with those who sell their favours for a price."

21. Pietro Bembo himself has a beard in the portrait of him by Titian now in the possession of the Nardi family. It is said that he grew it in 1535, the year that Morosina died.

22. Princess Renée had been imbued by her cousin Margaret of Navarre with the new religious theories, and she had with her in Italy her governess, Madame de Soubise, who belonged definitely to the party of reform. Renée corresponded with John Calvin, and in 1536, when he was secretly in Italy, he visited Ferrara under the name of Espeville.

23. Luigi Gonzaga succeeded in getting his eulogy printed together with *Orlando Furioso*, but it seems to have been a limited edition for the copies of it are very rare. *Orlando Furioso* was first published in 1515 and ever since the author had been occupied in revising and enlarging it. It brought Ludovico Ariosto in his lifetime a fame equal to that of Dante and Shakespeare. Perhaps the most astonishing thing in literary history is the interminable literature which has sprung up around the mere name of Hruoland, Warden of the Breton March, who fell with other knights in the pass of Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees where Charlemagne was ambushed by an unrecognised foe on his return from a campaign against the Saracens. No especial deed of valour seems to have been performed by Hruoland on this occasion but, coupled with a mythical Oliver, he came to have a deathless renown as Orlando in Italian, Roland in French, and Roldan in Spanish, and was the universal subject of heroic song from the time of Charlemagne onwards. In 1496 Matteo Boyardo, Count of Scandiano in the principality of Modena, published his *Orlando Innamorato* and in 1515 Ariosto took up the same subject, and the poems of Boyardo and Ariosto taken together form a complete series of events all devised from books and verses on the wars of Charlemagne and the actions of his Paladins. It was probably to insure its sale that the text of *Orlando Furioso* was interspersed with the eulogistic portraits of contemporary notabilities. Ariosto is also tedious at some length on the subject of his own mistress, a lady of Ferrara. Titian's portrait of the poet in the National Gallery is one of the great pictures of the world.

24. Vicovaro was a small town fifteen miles from Tivoli on the reverse of Mount Lucretilis, and on the confines of Horace's Sabine farm. The Orsini had originally no property between Vicovaro and Rome, but in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they had carved out for themselves a principality all round the lake of Biacciano.

25. The emperor was anxious to form an Italian defensive league to secure Milan and Genoa from French attacks.

26. Alfonso and Juan de Valdès were the twin sons of Hernando de Valdès, regidor of Cuenca a city of New Castile; he was an hereditary proprietor and a hidalgo of liberal fortune.

In a dispatch to Henry VIII dated from Villoch in Carinthea October 20th, 1532, Thomas Cranmer writes of "a great infection of the plague whereof many of the Emperor's household died, and among others Waldesius (Valdès) a Spaniard, the Emperor's Chief Secretary, who enjoyed his singular favour. He was well learned in the Latin tongue and partly in the Greek, and whensoever the Emperor would have anything well and exactly done in the Latin tongue it was ever put to Waldesius."

27. Titian's portrait of Ippolito de' Medici in Hungarian dress hangs over a fireplace in the Pitti Palace in Florence, but it has suffered severely from re-lining and restoration and is only the wreck of what it once was. The whereabouts of the second picture Titian painted of him is unknown.

28. Titian never kept this promise to go to Rome, but Giulia Gonzaga was painted by him at Naples in 1541 or 1542. This picture too has vanished. It was given to Ippolito Capilupi afterwards Bishop of Fano, who had been a friend of Giulia's childhood in Mantua. In the Archives Capilupi de Mantova is a letter from Giulia (Naples, April 25th, 1542), "I received yours of the 10th with the more pleasure that I had been hoping for it... I am glad that the picture is in the hands of your Lordship as by means of it you will perhaps remember the real person and in future will be more generous with your letters." She mentions Titian as the artist and discants on the portrait as being too flattering of her beauty.

29. Cardinal de' Medici's translation of the *Aeneid*, Book II, does not seem to have been printed until July 1539 at Citta di Castello, where it was published by Antonio Mazochi Cremonese and Nicolo da Guccij. In 1540 it was published at Venice in an edition of a translation of the first six books by various hands, and it re-appeared in another collection 1-6, also printed at Venice by Giouane Padouano and Nicolo d'Aristotile detto Zopino in 1543. After this it was included in numerous editions of the whole works of Virgil in 1556, 1567, 1568, 1573, 1586 all printed in Venice. Translators of the other books include A. Sansedoni, B. Borghesi, Bc. Piccolomini, L. di Lorenzo Martelli, A. Cerrebani, T. Procacchi, A. Piccolomini.

30. Illustrissima Signora,—

Perchè spesso ad uno oppresso da grave male l'esempio d'un maggior alleggerisce il martire: non trouando io a la pena mia altro rimedio, uolsi l'animo al' incendio di Troia, e misurando con quello il mio, conobbi senza dubbio nessun male entro a quelle mura esser auenuto, che nel mezzo del mio petto un simil non si senta, loquale cercando in parte sfogare di quel di Troia dolendomi ho scoperto il mio: onde lo mando a uoi, acciochè egli per uera somiglianza ui mostri gli affanni miei poi che ne i sospiri, ne le lagrime, ne 'l color mio ne l' han potuto mostrar giamai.

31. Clement VII, on this occasion of the French royal marriage, pledged the famous Medici diamond 'il libro' which was set in his cope. Many of the jewels he pledged to the Strozzi bank at this time, however, were the property of the Holy See.

32. See Itri, note 15.

33. Loreto, fifteen miles south of Ancona, has been called by the Roman Church the Mecca of Christendom. The Cathedral contains the Holy House at Nazareth where the Virgin Mary was born and lived, and which, it is said, was made into a church by the Apostles. After the fall of Jerusalem in 1291, legend says it was carried by Angels to Tersata in Dalmatia, in 1294 wafted across the Adriatic to Recanati, and thence, in 1295, to Loreto. A Bull in recognition of it was issued by Sixtus IV in 1491, and another, a good deal more cautiously worded, by Julius II in 1507. It is a plain brick building within the Cathedral walls, and contains a niche with a small black cedarwood figure of the Virgin and Child adorned with jewels and said to have been carved by St Luke. Around the Santa Casa is a marble screen, the work of Sansovino, Bandinelli and others after the design of Braniatouni.

34. Cardinal de' Medici was made Vice-Chancellor at Naples, July 3rd, 1532.

35. Isabella Colonna seemed to have succeeded to some extent in making herself felt in Mantua. She took possession of the palace at Sabbioneta, and Federico Gonzaga Duke of Mantua, of the elder branch of the family, paid her a state visit.

36. This monastery in Fondi had once harboured St Thomas Aquinas, and his cell and an orange tree he planted are still shown.

37. The *Didlogo de la Lengua* of Juan de Valdès, written in 1533, seems to have remained in manuscript until 1737, when it was published in Vol. II of *Origines de la lengua Española* by Gregorio Mayans, Madrid, 12mo.

38. Mr H. C. Lea in his monograph on the *Eve of the Reformation* in the Cambridge Modern History does not find it easy to decide to what extent humanism was responsible for heresy, but is confident that the teaching of the New Academy of Florence had destroyed reverence for authority. To the court of Urbino in its heyday came many who had sat at the feet of Marsiglio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano, and Cristoforo Landino.

39. The *De Gratia Contra Pelagium* of St Augustine.

40. Although firearms for sporting purposes were not known in England until the end of the seventeenth century, they were in use as early as the fifteenth century in Italy, Spain and Germany, and to some extent in France.

41. There are some testimonials in the Church which seem to prove that the Feudal House at Itri became a convent in the latter half of the fifteenth century when the Benedettine moved there from their convent in the country two miles away. They remained in Itri until about 1910 when the Aleantarine took their place: these sisters, who wear a brown habit and a black veil edged with blue, carry on a school for girls. The convent is now divided from the Castle ruins by the narrow Via San Martino.

42. The Franciscan monastery of the *Frati minori conventuali osservanti* is now the Town Hall of Itri. It stands about thirty yards from the Appian Way on the right bank of the river, in the Piazza dell' Sucoronazione, with the Church still behind it. It was built about 1350 and the Brotherhood was suppressed after the restoration of the Bourbons in 1814.

43. The palace at Fondi must have been a gem of Gothic architecture. A sorry remnant of it exists today amid squalid surroundings, and coarse grass and weeds and a rutted road at right angles to the Appian Way are all that are left of the garden (1933).

44. Seven of the pearls were very large and were given with others by Catherine de' Medici to her daughter-in-law Mary Queen of Scots. On Mary Stewart's death they were

appropriated by Queen Elizabeth and have since belonged to the Crown Jewels of England. King Edward VII wore them in his crown at his Coronation.

45. This exquisite little casket is now in the gem room of the Pitti Palace, and the mystery of its return to Italy has never been solved. It suddenly appeared in a list of Medici jewels in 1635, in the reign of the Grand Duke Ferdinand II. M. Baschet suggests that it came to Florence with Christian of Lorraine, the granddaughter of Catherine de' Medici, who married the Grand Duke Ferdinand I in 1589. He quotes an entry in the inventory of her guarda-ropa to uphold his theory, but it is not very convincing.

46. Letter from the Duchess of Camerino to the Marchioness of Mantua dated Florence, August 6th, 1533. Mantuan Archives, E. xxvii.

47. Appendix 8 in M. Armand Baschet's *Jeunesse de Catherine de' Medici* gives a summary of the endless documents relating to the negotiations about her marriage since 1524. (See Preface.)

48. Among the papers of suppressed convents in the Archives of Florence are seven letters from Caterina de' Medici written to the Abbess of the Murate between the years 1542 and 1588; all are replies to letters from the convent, some making requests, some evidently of a complimentary nature only designed to keep memory green. In a letter of 1588 at the end of her life she says she sends not the marble bust she had promised but her portrait 'au vif de moy tres bien fait'. She asks that it may be placed in the church of the convent for a short time and that the nuns will pray that she may have grandchildren for the well-being of all Christianity. In the Archives is, too, a document dated 1584 in which Catherine recalls the happy days she spent within the walls of the Murate and gives to the Abbess and Nuns in perpetuity four villas with all their appurtenances in Valdelsa (near Florence) on condition of certain prayers for her son Henry, for the repose of the soul of her husband, and for Masses for her own soul after her death. In 1588 she prevailed on the Grand Duke Cosimo to lower their taxes (*Lettres de Catherine de Médicis*, Vol. x, p. 321).

49. Vasari writes of this picture to Carlo Guasconi (*Vita di Sebastiano Viniziano*, edit. Le Monnier, Vol. x, p. 131): his sitter had won his admiration and affection, and he ends his eulogy by saying that he adores her as he adores the Saints in Paradise. This portrait, as well as that of Angelo Bronzino, painted at the same time, has disappeared.

50. The first letter of Catherine de' Medici's of which there is any record is a copy of one addressed to the Duke of Albany at Spezzia and dated September 2nd, 1533, from Pistoia. It is a formal and affectionate reply to one from himself which she had found awaiting her arrival (Copie Bibl. nat. fonds Dupuy MS 486, p. 43).

M. Armand Baschet is eloquent on the subject of the paucity of Catherine's earlier letters, and his own certainty that others besides this must exist somewhere: and, writing in 1866, he expends sarcasm on the good-humoured passive resistance which M. de Laferrière-Percy, editor of the *Lettres privées et des Missives de Catherine de Medici* met with in the Vatican when he desired to make the exhaustive search for which he was peculiarly qualified.

51. The stronghold of Villeneuve-Loubet, which is now a national monument, was built by Romée de Villeneuve, seneschal of Provence and governor of Nice, who died 1250 and who appears in the *Paradiso*. Two centuries later it was bought by Pierre de Lascaris, Count of Tenda-Ventemiglia, and was inherited by his granddaughter Anne de Lascaris, whose husband René, Count of Villars, was illegitimate and eldest son of Philip II of Savoy and the brother of Duke Charles. He was killed at Pavia in 1525.

52. See a letter from the Secretary Niccolò Raince to Francis I (Bibl. nat. fonds Clairambault, Vol. 334, p. 488).

53. Letter from Catherine de' Medici to the Duchess of Savoy. Archives of Turin (trans.): "Having read what your Excellency writes to me and heard what your Equerry has told me I send you many thanks for your great and amiable courtesy for which I owe you infinite obligation. Here, by your grace, we are comfortable and well enough and want for nothing. And having nothing further to say I ever commend myself to you. From Nice the 14th September, 1533. As a daughter, Caterina Medici."

54. If a secret treaty between Clement VII and Francis I was ever signed at Marseilles the document has never come to light. All that exists is a draft in the king's own handwriting which is in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The draft has seven heads, and the chief

points are that the conquests of Milan and Urbino shall be undertaken with the Pope's aid in men and money, and that the two dukedoms shall be bestowed on the Duke of Orleans.

55. Letter from Catherine de' Medici to the Duke of Albany, September 12th, 1533 (Bibl. nat. fonds Dupuy MS 586, p. 35). She asks if it is true that ships left in the harbour at Spezzia have fallen into the hands of Barbarossa, and begs him to send the drummer of the Captain Gianazo whom she hears plays French dances very well.

56. Queen Elinor, the second wife of Francis I, was the sister of the Emperor Charles V.

57. M. Baschet has an account of certain private letters and documents in various archives which deal with the detail of the ceremonies of the marriage of Caterina de' Medici. He gives in full a curious letter to the Duke of Milan, and in this there is a reference to an official account which had evidently been printed in Marseilles or Paris, but which has not survived, or at least has never come to light. To the letters he mentions must be added one from P. Bertherian to the Bailiff of Troyes (Bibl. nat. fonds Dupuy 247, p. 253).

58. Two contemporary letters bear witness to Cardinal de' Medici's magnificence: (1) G. Sanchez to Ferdinand I, December 20th, 1533 (Court and State Archives of Vienna); (2) Agostino Spinola to the Duke of Mantua (Archives of Mantua).

59. Pope Damasus (A.D. 366-84) built a Church and public library out of the materials of the barracks of the Green Charioteers, and close to the site chosen for his palace by Cardinal Riario in 1495. The Cardinal moved the Church and incorporated it in the palace and it is still called S. Lorenzo in Damaso. The original vaulted roof is now replaced by a ceiling, and the whole Church has been altered and lined with marbles by the architect Virginio Vespignani in recent years, and greatly, as some maintain, to the detriment of its original beauty.

60. Bernardino Ochino was born in Siena in 1487 and was page to Pandolfo Petrucci. He joined the Franciscan Osservanti and was both General and Provincial, but in 1534 he went to Rome with fifty other members of the Order to join the Cappucini. He preached all over Italy, and in 1536 was in Naples, where Charles V regularly attended his sermons. In 1542 he was invited, at the instance of Cardinal Bembo, to preach in Venice, but by this time the Holy Office was beginning to be active in Italy, and a little later, when he was cited to Rome to give account of his doctrine, he was advised by Pietro Martire Vermigli (another great preacher of the Augustinian Order, and also a suspect) to leave Italy with him. The two went to Ferrara and thence to Geneva and England. Vermigli was made Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, but Ochino returned to a wandering life on the continent and died in Moravia in 1563.

61. In three letters written from Rome to the Cardinal Bibbiena at Modona in 1516, Bembo says:

*A' 25 d' Aprile:* "Jeri vidi il S. Ippolitino nel giardino della casa di N.S. più bello, che alcuno di fiori di quel giardino."

*A' 30 d' Aprile:* "Ho visitato questa mattina il Sig. Ippolitino: il quale si vestiva, pettinandolo tuttavia Francesco: E bello come una Rosa, ed a voi si raccomanda: nè singo anzi sono esse parole sue."

*A' 20 di Guigno:* "Bastami darvi contezza che il Sig. Ippolitino è bello come una bella rosa, e fassi il più dolce fanciullino del mondo. E che la loggia, la stufetta, le camere, i paramenti del cuojo di V.S. sono forniti, ed ogni cosa l' aspetta."

62. The very long and involved story of the intrigues against the Cappucini ended in their banishment from Rome, Easter 1534, although the Pope refused to repeal their brief. All Rome was roused over the affair and the wild hermit Brandano re-appeared in the streets with his denunciations. Caterina Cibo had left Rome, and she hurried back when the tale reached her; but found that Vittoria Colonna had arrived from Marino before her, had persuaded the Pope that he had been misled, and that the Cappucini were already re-installed in S. Giacomo.

63. Ferrante Gonzaga was the third son of Isabella d'Este, and the youngest brother of the Duke of Mantua and the Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga.

64. Letter from Fabrizio Peregrino to the Duke of Mantua from Rome, July 6th, 1534. In Gonzaga Archives, Mantua.

"Di nuove altro non ve è per hora eccetto chel N.S. è assai bene convaluto della sua indispositione et risanato et il rmo di Medici hor mai dimostra havere disposta quella sua fantasia di non più scappellarsi et vuole attendere al ecclesiastico et essere buon figliuolo come sempre è stato et, se non ha incominciato presto incomincerà a prendere li ordini sacri per non possere più tornare addietro, cosa ch' al qiusitio mio credo ch' l se ne renderà benissimo consigliato. S. S<sup>ta</sup> gli paga tutti i debiti che sonno di molta somma et gli dona roo ducati al mese per sua provisione del vivere, restando in questo grado se ritrovarà un bello, ricco et adventurato prelato."

65. The Turkish fleet left Constantinople at the end of July and it must have reached Sperlonga not later than the first week in August, for a letter dated Rome, August 10th, 1534, and written by Francesco Sarracino to the Cardinal Ercole d'Este, is in the Archives of Modena, and says that Barbarossa had attempted to seize Donna Giulia.

66. Khiyr-ed-din, or Barbarossa, as Christian Europe called him, was one of the four sons of Jakub, an Albanian settled in Mitylene after its conquest by the Turks. Jakub was a coasting trader and all his sons became sea-rovers and led stormy lives plundering the possessions of Spain, the Knights of St John, Genoa, and the north African princes. In 1515 Khiyr and his elder brother Arouj were called in by the natives of Algiers to help them against the Spaniards, and they responded by occupying the province and murdering the ruler who had appealed to them. Arouj was eventually expelled, but Khiyr clung to his possessions and appealed to the Sultan. So began the Turkish rule in N. Africa. The Sultan made Khiyr Kapudan Pasha, or Admiral of the Fleet, and he was given the Turkish navy to re-shape and laid the keels of narrower vessels. By the spring of 1534 he had launched eighty-four new galleys and fusts or galleots, with crews for the oars.

67. It is an unavoidable conclusion that the authors who have described the flight of Giulia Gonzaga in any detail can have had no knowledge of Fondi, and of the respective positions of the palace, the keep, and the drawbridge. But given the darkness and a foe unacquainted with the buildings and the ground, the episode was possible. Once free of the keep it would have been easy to gallop across the plain to the foot of the mountains and escape from assailants on foot who approached from the other side. The difficulty lay in getting away unobserved at such close quarters: that this was actually accomplished meant great daring and good fortune.

68. Campomedile was one of the fiefs of the duchy, and is a walled hill city with a castle, on a steep eminence among the mountains about seven or eight miles from Fondi.

69. The Turks raided Fondi again in 1574.

## ITRI

1. Varchi, *Storia Fiorentina*, Book 14, has the partisan story of the conspiracy.

2. In the Archives of Florence Car. Strozzi, Filza 3716c (4) is a letter from the Cardinal de' Medici to Captain Franciolino. It is dated from Rome, August 20th, 1534, so the Cardinal must have been back on that day and would have been in Fondi not longer than a week. He asks Franciolino to disband the men as he cannot now use them, and he thanks him for his diligence in raising a fine company and promises to remember him as he deserves and bids him have patience. He addresses him as 'Franciolino Carissimo'.

3. Cf. Peregrino's cypher reports of June 19th and 25th, 1534, in the Gonzaga Archives, Mantua.

4. *Repetition de amores: E arte de Axedres con C L iuegos de partido* by Luis Ramirez de Lucena (Salamanca, 1495).

5. Clement VII had a relapse on September 21st and died on September 25th, 1534.

6. The will of Clement VII is in the Florentine Archives Carte Strozzi 1, 106.

7. Herr Gregorovius in *Rome in the Middle Ages*, Vol. xiii, gives a full translation of this brief with the reference Raynald ad A. 1534 n. lxxvii.

8. Dr Ludwig von Pastor says, Vol. xi, p. 28: "But within that frail body there was a stout spirit and an iron force of will. This energy combined with a judicious mode of

life and a wise economy of strength—plenty of exercise in the fresh air and frequent sojourns in the country—belied the fears and rebuked the hopes of others. It was decreed that this man, whose life seemed to have such slender tenure, was to have the longest pontificate of any Pope of the sixteenth century."

9. The Cardinal de' Medici must have left Rome but a day or two after the Conclave, for the assiduous Peregrino, writing to his master, October 17th, 1534, and trimming his sails confidently, says (Mantuan Archives): "The departure from Rome of the Cardinal de' Medici is not to be deplored because he has never been liked at this (the papal) court. He never made a friend of anyone, he never esteemed people or took account of anyone but bravos and rascals. Now he will discover what a difference there is between favour and disfavour: he is actually hated by Cardinals, by Prelates, by Courtiers, and above all by the Romans. I am sorry to be obliged to write this to your Excellency but I must ever write the truth. I could wish it were the contrary."

10. When Giulia Gonzaga died in 1566 all her papers were sequestered, and her 'heretical' correspondence with Carneseccchi and others led to their arrest. Particulars are given in the *Legazioni* of Averado Serristori, Ambassador of Duke Cosimo de' Medici, published 1853.

Dott. Bruto Amante, also, mentions the matter as occurring in the correspondence of Paolo Tiepolo the Venetian ambassador, and quotes the ambassador Rabbi (?) as having written in a letter of June 28th, 1566, that the Pope on seeing these writings declared that "if he had seen these before her death he would have taken good care to burn her alive".

11. Pietro Carneseccchi had been private secretary to Clement VII. He was arrested by the Inquisition in 1566 and after a long trial was beheaded and his body burnt on the bridge of S. Angelo.

12. The great Gothic Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, built on the site of a temple of Minerva Chalcidica close to the Pantheon, was the titular Church of both Cardinal Giovanni and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici.

13. Ippolito de' Medici died before Lombardi began his work, and Bandinelli persuaded Lucrezia Salviati and Cardinals Salviati and Ridolfi to entrust him again with the tombs. He gave little care or time to them however, and finally went to Florence to court the favour of Cosimo de' Medici, leaving them unfinished. The Cardinals then entrusted the tomb of Pope Leo to Raffaello da Montlupo and that of Pope Clement to Giovanni di Baccio Bigio. The statues of the two papal cousins are very much idealised and poor works of art. On the floor between them a slab marks the grave of Pietro Bembo, but the original inscription on it has been removed.

14. The Legation of the Marches was conferred on the Cardinal de' Medici, September 5th, 1534.

15. Clement VII sold Cardinal Benedetto Accolti the legatine government of the Marches of Ancona for 19,000 ducats. The Cardinal was arrested on April 5th, 1535, and imprisoned in S. Angelo. Herr von Pastor says of his trial that "it disclosed monstrosities bordering on the incredible", and that in him "all the corruption of his age reached its rankest development". He regained his freedom however on payment of a fine of 59,000 scudi, and he ended his days in the court of Cosimo de' Medici, 1st Grand Duke of Tuscany.

16. A copy of the appeal of Cardinal de' Medici to Caesar is in the Carta Strozzianno in Florence. It was published by Rastrelli (1781) in *Alessandro I duca di Firenze*, Vol. II, p. 221.

17. The lavolta was the parent of the modern waltz and was very fashionable at the French Court in the sixteenth century. As danced by Henry III it was the *deux-temps* of society in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

18. Philip de Lannoy was the son of the former Viceroy of Naples, Charles de Lannoy, who had died of the plague in Rome after the sack. He had been made Prince of Sulmona, the district between Aquila and Naples and the town which was the birthplace of Ovid.

19. Varchi, *Storia Fiorentina*, Book 14.

20. Melon rind rubbed on the skin of the face was a favourite nostrum for clearing and beautifying it.

21. In the three volumes *Delle Poesie Volgari e Latine di Francesco Molza and Pierantonio Seratti* (Bergamo, MDCCXLVII) there is no sonnet about this expedition addressed by

Molza to his patron. There is however a sonnet purporting to be written by Ippolito de' Medici himself and addressed 'al Molza'

Molza quel vero, e glorioso onore  
 Che Cesar volge nell' antica strada  
 Di gir a ricercar nova contrada,  
 Per trovar degno pregio al suo valore;  
 Fa che mi paion anni i giorni e l' ore,  
 Che stato son così vilmente a bada:  
 Egli mi chiama, e 'nsegnami ond' io vada  
 Per uscir d' ozio e dell' invidia fuore.  
 Questi mi spinse alla più rea stagione  
 Dove Vienna il gran Danubio bagna,  
 E verso il mar maggior superbo scende:  
 Or in Africa lieto m' accompagna,  
 Mentre varcato il Cancro al gran Leone  
 L' ardente stella il largo petto incende.

22. Paolo Giovio was of an ancient family of Como. He took a medical degree at Pavia and practised for some years in Rome, but became noted for his historical studies, was patronised by Popes Leo and Adrian and was given a suite of rooms in the Vatican and certain benefices by Pope Clement, whom he helped to escape to S. Angelo in the sack and afterwards accompanied to Bologna and Marseilles. With the advent of Pope Paul III, he found times had changed, and he retired finally to his villa at Como. He was looked on as the modern Livy. All he wrote gives a lively picture of the times and is valuable on that account although unreliable as fact.

23. The galley was the vessel in common use in the Mediterranean for ages. The galleas and the galleon, both derived from it, did not come into use until about 1550 or even later.

24. The controversy as to the cause of the death of Ippolito de' Medici will never be settled. Varchi, in the pay of the Duke Cosimo de' Medici, was concerned to prove that Pope Paul III had contrived the poison. Dr Ludwig von Pastor says that the most recent research has shown that the cause of death was malignant fever, and gives his authorities (Vol. xi, pp. 312-13). Dott. d'Ercole however strongly supports the poison theory, and, seemingly unaware that the remittent form of malaria is often rapid in effect and fatal in result, says that "it is not possible that malaria which, then as now, was a very low and slow fever, should destroy a life like Ippolito's, not in the least delicate, in a few days". The present owner of the castle of Itri, Signor Avvocato Pasquale Emilio Tallonghi, summing up all the evidence in a private letter, comes down heavily on the side of the malaria theory.

25. See fol. 233 of a 'Diario' compiled by A. Massarelli da Sanseverino in 1543, the original MS of which was in the library of Antonio Moraldi, and is quoted by Bruto Amante in his *Giulia Gonzaga*.

26. The deposition of Andrea da Borgo S. Sepulcro is preserved in Archivio Mediceo (f. 660 inst. vi).

27. As Cardinal de' Medici died intestate his creditors had to bring a suit against his estate to recover their money. The list of creditors with the examination of their claims is a document of 48 pages (Car. Stroz. F. 18, Florence).

28. Dal Galletti (Cod. Vat. 7913, c. 66, n. 188 bis).

This inscription was still on the wall of a chapel in San Lorenzo in Damaso in 1907 for Dott. d'Ercole saw it there. Since then the church has undergone great alteration and the greater part of the walls have been lined with marble. All traces of Cardinal de' Medici's grave and memorial tablet have vanished. The inscription is given by Forcella No. 489 in *Iscrizioni delle Chiese e degli altri edifici di Roma*, Vol. v, p. 174.

29. These two sonnets are Vol. I, pp. 251 and 254 of Molza's *Poesie* (see note 21).

30. This letter to Molza is number xviii in *Rime e Lettere di Veronica Gambara*, novamente pubblicate per cura di Pia Mestica Chiappetti. Firenze. G. Barbera Editore. 1879. New material for this edition was given by Cav. Avv. Quirino Bigi de Correggio. Letter



xix is written to Gabriele Cesano, Ippolito's former secretary, who had been in Spain with Charles V. In it V. Gambara refers to the way Cesano's illustrious master had died and asks if there is no open way to revenge him. It is evident that the belief that he was poisoned if not genuine was fostered.

## URBINO

1. Letter from Ferrante Gonzaga to Andrea Doria, April 2nd, 1545, asking for the loan of the galleys (Mantuan Archives).

2. All that Juan de Valdès wrote during his residence at Naples remained in manuscript and in the Spanish tongue until after his death, but the manuscripts were well worn from circulation before they came eventually into the hands of translators and printers all over Europe. Their history is given (if somewhat confusedly) in addenda to Mr B. J. Wiffen's translation of *Alfabeto Christiano* (Bosworth and Harrison, 1861). This religious treatise is in the form of a dialogue between Valdès himself and Giulia Gonzaga, and it is to the same lady that the author dedicated his translation of the Psalms from the Hebrew (which has disappeared) and his Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans and the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Valdès' best-known work, *Zionto i diez Considerationes*, is evidently the subject-matter of his discourses at 110 gatherings on Sunday mornings in the villa at Chiaja. An Italian translation was published at Basle in 1550, a French translation at Lyons in 1563 and a Dutch translation in the same year. In the next century Nicholas Ferrar translated the *Divine Considerations* into English and they were published 4to (Oxford, 1638) with full notes by George Herbert, and 12mo (Cambridge, 1646).

3. The authorship of this book has always been in dispute. It was said to be the work of a Benedictine Monk, Benedetto, and revised by Marcantonio Flaminio. But some writers maintain that it is the same book as *Trattato Utilissimo del Beneficio di Cristo Crucifisso* by Aonio Paleario. It was printed in Venice, and, in 1544, 40,000 more copies were published in Rome. It was put on the Index in 1549 when Gadaldino of Venice reprinted it and sold it. It was called the *Credo* of the Italian Reformation, and the Inquisition made such a superhuman effort to stamp it out that it was believed every copy had been destroyed. St John's College, Cambridge, possesses an original copy. In M'Crie's *History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy of the Sixteenth Century*, 2nd ed. 1833, p. 355, it is said that "on taking down an old house at Urbino in the year 1728, the workmen disinterred a copy of Bruccioli's Paraphrase of St Paul's epistles, with some books of Ochino, Valdès, and others of the same kind, which had remained in concealment for more than a century and a half."

4. Piero Strozzi arrived at the French court at the time of the marriage of Catherine de' Medici with a band of arquebusiers, and was taken into the French service. Henry II subsequently made him Captain-General of the Italian infantry, and he ended his career as a Marshal of France.

5. These two MSS are now in the Vatican with the rest of the Urbino library. The miniatures in both were formerly attributed to Giulio Clovio, but that is no longer accepted as correct. An account of the MSS is in *I Ritratti e le Gesta dei Duchi d' Urbino*, Rome, 1913.

6. Pietro Bembo's tract, *De Guido Ubaldo Feretrio deque Elisabetha Gonzagia Urbini ducibus*, was issued at Venice in 1530 by Giovanni Antonio de Sabio e fratelli, in quarto form. A translation by Niccolò Mazzi was published at Florence in 1555 by Lorenzo Torrentino.

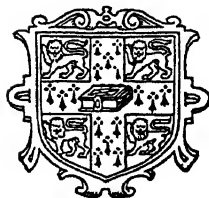
7. P. Bembo, writing to Veronica Gambara in December 1543, says: "Often do I desire to be the unfettered Bembo of old days rather than as I now am. But what better can one make of it? Man's existence abounding more in crosses than in gratifying incidents will have it so; and wiser he who least desponds and best puts up with necessity than one that less conforms to it. Yet I own myself unable to do this amidst these privations and exiled

in a manner from myself. For in truth I am neither at Venice nor Padua as your ladyship supposes, but at my Church of Gubbio, a very wild place to say the truth, and offering few conveniences."

8. Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (II) afterwards raised the gorgeous Jesuit Church of the Gesù on the site of S. Maria della Strada.

9. The Bull establishing six Cardinals as a Board of Inquisition was dated July 21st, 1542.

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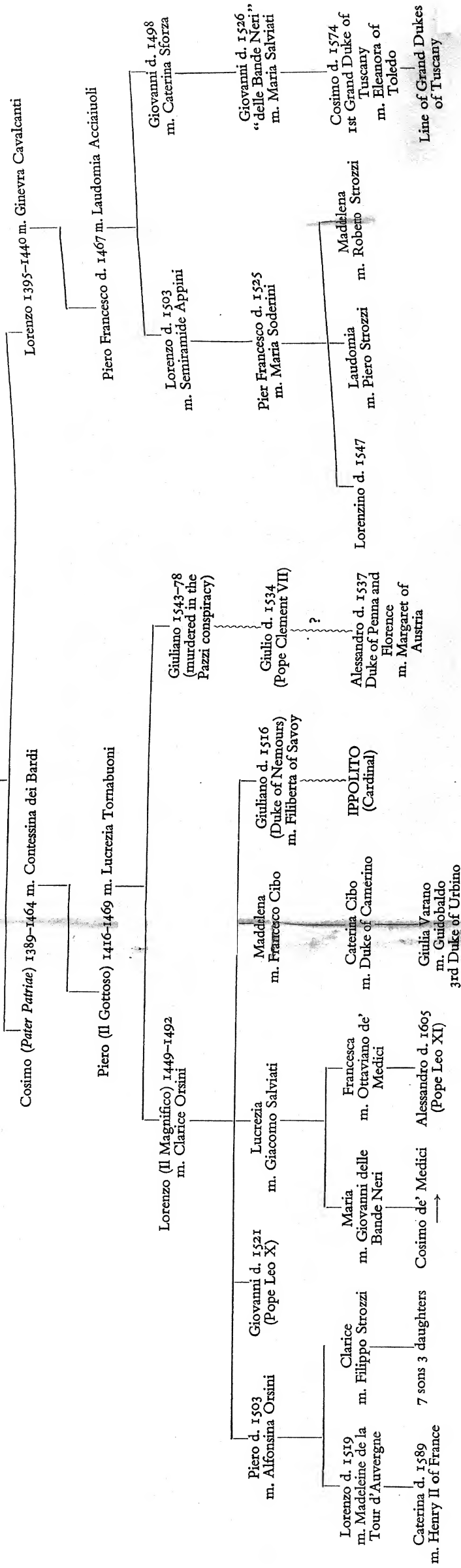


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